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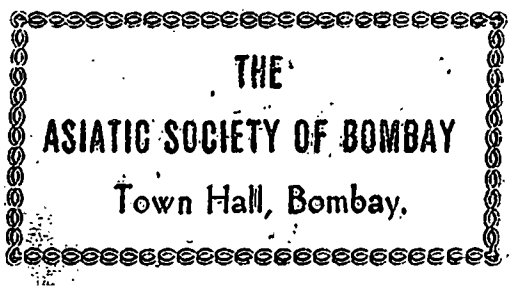

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*** In addition to the very reſpectable teſtimony of the Reverend Henry Kett (ſee Preface to the former volume, p. viii.), the tranſlator feels conſiderable gratification in being permitted to lay before the Reader the following extract from a letter addreſſed to him by his much-reſpected friend, Charles Butler, Eſq. of Lincoln's Inn, with the depth and extent of whoſe reſearches in Eccleſiaſtical and Civil Hiſtory, the learned world has not now to be brought acquainted.

"I am rejoiced at your intention of favouring us with a publication of your tranſlation of Moſheim's Commentaries. The original work is quite familiar to me. Some years ago I read the whole of it attentively, and committed to paper the obſervations which occurred to me in the peruſal of it. I have ſince very frequently conſulted it. There can be no doubt of its being a work of profound and extenſive erudition, and that it contains much learning both in reſpect to fact and deduction which is no where elſe to be met with. It alſo abounds with hiſtorical and literary anecdote In every ſenſe it is a diſtinct work from the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory; ſo that it may be deemed as neceſſary to the poſſeſſors of that work, as if that work had never been written.—I think your ſtyle very clear, and well ſuited to the work; and have no doubt but that your tranſlation of the Commentaries will be quite as popular as Maclaine's of the General Hiſtory."

"I hope you will accompany it with ſome diſſertations of your own, for which the work affords you an excellent opportunity: and, in regard to this I would beg leave to call your attention more particularly to

four ſubjects, none of which have been much noticed by the writers of this country. The firſt is an account of the Manicheiſm of the middle ages, which may be done by a continuation of Moſheim's note on the original Manichees. Moſheim's own account of thoſe of the middle age in his general Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, and Baſnage's account of them in his Hiſtory of the Reformed Churches, contain much curious matter, but are imperfectly executed. I think this is admitted by Dr. Maclaine the tranſlator of Moſheim.

"The converſion of the northern nations is alſo an intereſting ſubject, and I apprehend you will find curious materials for it in Moſheim's account of the converſion of the Tartars: but I ſpeak of that work from the author's general character, for I have never ſeen it.

"The third diſſertation I ſuggeſt to you is a Hiſtory of the Apoſtles' Creed. Moſheim's notice of it is too ſhort.

"The laſt diſſertation I take the liberty to hint to you is a geographical account of the eccleſiaſtical diviſion of the Chriſtian world at the time of the final diviſion of the Roman Empire, accompanied with a map. You will find ample materials for this in Bingham, and Ezekiel Spanheim.

"I only beg leave to add, that I can ſcarcely conceive a more curious work than a full hiſtorical account of the different confeſſions of faith by which the Chriſtian churches profeſs themſelves to be regulated. This would be a fine addition to your work, but would exceed the limits of a diſſertation."

CONTENTS

OF

THE SECOND VOLUME.

THE ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY OF THE SECOND CENTURY.

SECT. PAGE

I. Extenſive propagation of the Chriſtian religion - - - 1, 2

— Certain paſſages in the early Fathers relating to this ſubject, to be underſtood with ſome qualification. Note [a] - 2—5

II. Miſſion of Pantænus to India - - 3—6

— The people to whom he was ſent probably Jews who had ſettled in Arabia Felix. Note [b] - - - 6—8

III. Origin of the Gallic, German, and Engliſh churches - - - - 7—16.

— The three different opinions that have prevailed reſpecting the origin of the Gallic church examined. Note [c] - 8—13

— The German and Gallic churches probably owed their foundation to the ſame perſons. Note [d] - - - 13—15

— Statement and examination of various opinions reſpecting the origin of the Britiſh church. What upon the whole appears to be the moſt rational hypotheſis in regard thereto. Note [e] - - 16—22

SECT. PAGE
IV. Number of Chriſtians in this age - 17—27
— Reaſons which have induced writers of the moſt oppoſite characters and views to concur in undervaluing the churches of this century. It is clear even from the teſtimony of heathen writers that the Chriſtians muſt at this period have been very numerous. Note [g] - - 23—26
V. Cauſes to which the rapid propagation of Chriſtianity is to be attributed - 27—32
— The belief that miraculous powers were poſſeſſed by great numbers of the Chriſtians in this and the ſucceeding age not at all contrary to ſound reaſon. Dr. Middleton's *Free Inquiry into the Miraculous Powers*, &c. an inſidious publication. The high ground taken by this author however to a certain extent abandoned by him previous to his death. Note [i] - - - - 28—32
VI. Human cauſes which contributed to forward the propagation of Chriſtianity 23—41
— Various tranſlations of the New Teſtament into the Latin and other languages made even at this early period. Not certain that any of them have reached our days. Latin tranſlations particularly numerous. More than ordinary excellence attributed by Auguſtine to one termed *the Italic*. Great endeavours uſed by the learned of France and Italy to recover this verſion. Their labours unattended with ſucceſs. Miſtaken ideas entertained by them on the ſubject. Note [k] - - *ib.*
— Why the early apologiſts for Chriſtianity did not concern themſelves with demonſtrating its divine origin. Note [l] 40, 41
VII. Diſingenuous artifices occaſionally reſorted to in the propagation of Chriſtianity 41—45
— The Sybilline verſes, a ſpurious compoſition. Note [m] - - - 42

SECT. PAGE

VII. The Poemander and other writings falſely attributed to Hermes Triſmegiſtus. Note [o] - - - - - 43
— Montanus ſuſpected to have been the author of the Sybilline verſes. Note [p] 44
VIII. State of the Chriſtians under the reign of Trajan - - - - - 45, 46
— Populace continually incited to perſecute them - - - - - - *ib.*
— The perſecution in Bithynia under Pliny the Younger obviouſly originated with the heathen prieſts. Note [t] 46, 47
IX. Trajan's law reſpecting the Chriſtians 47, 48
— Trajan not unfavourably diſpoſed towards the Chriſtians, but afraid of incurring the ill-will of the prieſthood and the populace. Note [u] - - 48—50
X. Effects produced by the law of Trajan 49—52
— Martyrdom of Simeon and Ignatius - 50, 51
— The Chriſtians diſſatisfied with Trajan's law on account of its lenity - - *ib.*
— Their eagerneſs after martyrdom repreſſed by a law - - - - - - 52
— Trajan moſt ſcrupulouſly obſervant of the proviſions of his own law. Note [w] 51
XI. State of the Chriſtians under the reign of Hadrian - - - - - 52—54
— The multitude taught to clamour for the perſecution of the Chriſtians at the public games and other ſpectacles 53
— The magiſtrates dared not diſregard this kind of call. Note [y] - - *ib.*
XII. Hadrian's new law in favour of the Chriſtians - - - - - 54—56
— Although on a curſory view this law may have the appearance of being more lenient, it probably did not differ materially from the law of Trajan. Note [z] 55
— The ſuſpicion that Hadrian meant to aſſign Chriſt a place amongſt the Roman deities unfounded. Note [c] 56, 57
XIII. Barchocba an enemy to the Chriſtians 57, 58

SECT. PAGE
XIII. Jeruſalem finally overthrown, and the city of Ælia Capitolina erected by Hadrian on its ruins - - 57, 58
XIV. State of the Chriſtians under Antoninus Pius - - - - - 58—60
—— The edict *ad commune Aſiæ* belongs to this emperor, not to his ſucceſſor. Note [*i*] - - - - 60, 61
XV. State of the Chriſtians under Marcus Aurelius - - - - - 61—67
—— This philoſophic emperor a more malignant perſecutor of the Chriſtians than even Nero or Domitian. Note [*k*] 62—64
—— The enemies of the Chriſtians encouraged to charge them with crimes of the moſt horrible nature. Note [*l*] *ib.*
—— Infamous conduct of the magiſtrates exemplified from what took place during the perſecution at Lyons. Note [*m*] - - - - - - 65, 66
—— The condition of the Chriſtians worſe under the reign of Marcus Aurelius than under that of any of his predeceſſors. His ill-will towards them not attributable to ſuperſtition, but to the inſinuations of the Stoic philoſophers. The contraſt drawn by him between the behaviour of a Stoic philoſopher and that of a Chriſtian in the article of death. Note [*n*] - - 67—70
XVI. Afflictions of the Chriſtians under the reign of Marcus - - - 68—71
—— Martyrdom of Juſtin, Polycarp, and Pothinus - - - - - - *ib.*
—— Circumſtances attending the perſecution at Lyons. The tenor of the preſident's letter being unknown, an ambiguity is thereby thrown over the emperor's reſcript. Note [*q*] 71—73
XVII. The miracle of the thundering legion 72—75

Con-

SECT. PAGE
XVII. Controverſy amongſt the learned, and particularly between King and Moyle on this ſubject. An attempt made to place this matter in its proper point of view. Note [r] - 75—82
XVIII. State of the Chriſtians under Commodus and Severus - 76—83
—— They are expoſed to a dreadful ſeries of calamities and ſufferings. Infamous conduct of the magiſtrates towards them. They are broken in upon even in their ſacred aſſemblies. The puniſhments inflicted on them to the laſt degree ſavage and inhuman. Their dead bodies dug up and torn to pieces by the multitude. Note [u] - 83—85
XIX. Philoſophers inimical to the Chriſtian cauſe - - - 84—88
—— Celſus not an Epicurean philoſopher but one of the Modern Platonic ſchool. His ideas of Chriſtianity derived from the Gnoſtics. The fancied improvements of theſe latter proved highly detrimental to the Chriſtian cauſe. Note [v] - 86
—— Creſcens the Cynic philoſopher, and Fronto the rhetorician - - 87
—— Conſiderations which probably induced the philoſophers to promote the perſecution of the Chriſtians. Note [x] - - 88, 89
XX. Government of the Church 89, 90
XXI. Authority of the Apoſtolic Churches 90—97
—— Two remarkable paſſages in Irenæus and Tertullian, in which theſe writers make their appeal to the Apoſtolic Churches, conſidered. All the Apoſtolic Churches are placed by them on a preciſely equal footing. Their ſilence with regard to the church

SECT. PAGE
XXI. church of Jeruſalem accounted for. Reaſons for the difference that is obſervable between theſe authors in ſpeaking of the church of Rome. The famous eulogium of Irenæus on the Roman church examined in detail. Note [z] - - 91—99
XXII. Civil unity introduced amongſt the Chriſtians - - 98—100
—— Synods or Councils had their origin in Greece - - - *ib.*
—— Religion conſidered by the early Chriſtians as ſuperior to the controul of human laws. Conſiderable light thrown by a paſſage in Tertullian, *de Jejuniis*, on the extent to which the power of the primitive Biſhops reached. Various particulars to be collected from this author reſpecting the origin, &c. of councils. Note [a] 100—107
XXIII. Effects produced by the introduction of this civil unity - - 101—110
—— A certain degree of independence retained by various churches. Note [b] 108, 109
—— Pre-eminence of the Biſhops of Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria - *ib.*
—— The authority and power of theſe prelates not unlimited. The riſe of the Hierarchy gradual. Note [d] - 110
XXIV. Compariſon of the Chriſtian with the Jewiſh Prieſthood - 110—112
—— Gives riſe to the claim of tythes and firſt-fruits. The Greek and Oriental churches took the lead in urging this claim. Note [f] - - *ib.*
XXV. A taſte for philoſophy introduced amongſt the Chriſtians 113—118
—— Juſtin and other philoſophers, upon their embracing Chriſtianity did not abandon their priſtine garb and mode of

SECT. PAGE
XXV. of life. Note [g] - 113, 114
—— The ſtudy of philoſophy encouraged by Pantænus, Athenagoras, and Clement, ſucceſſively præfects of the catechetical ſchool at Alexandria. Clement a moſt zealous defender of the Greek philoſophy. The Origin of that diſpoſition to philoſophic ſpeculation which began to prevail in the church towards the cloſe of this century may doubtleſs be referred to the ſchool of Alexandria. Note [b] 114—118
—— Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Juſtin Martyr, &c. although they diſclaimed a partiality for any particular philoſophic ſect, were yet obviouſly devoted to the tenets of the Eclectics Not [i] - - - 118, 119
XXVI. Contentions among the Chriſtians with regard to philoſophy - 119—123
—— The culture of philoſophy, logic, and geometry decried by many as heretical. Diſputes reſpecting faith and reaſon prevailed even at this early period. The arguments by which the cauſe of philoſophy is defended by Clement in his *Stromata*. The early Chriſtian teachers, by way of gaining over the philoſophers to their ſide encouraged the belief that the difference between Chriſtianity and Philoſophy was but trifling. Note [k] 120—125
XXVII. The ſchool of Ammonius Saccas 124—130
—— The life and actions of Ammonius involved in great obſcurity. The different accounts given of him by Porphyry and Euſebius. Arguments proving that although an apoſtate in heart he yet never openly ſeceded from the church. Note [l] 126—129

He-

SECT. PAGE
XXVII. Heraclas, unqueſtionably, one of the pupils of Ammonius. Note [*m*] - 129
XXVIII. The philoſophy of Ammonius 130—134
——— His favourite object was to bring about a reconciliation between all the different philoſophic ſects, and to harmonize all religions - - *ib.*
——— The ſentiments of the Emperor Julian with regard to this. Note [*n*] - 130
——— The Ammonian ſect referred the origin of all wiſdom to the Eaſt. The writings of Hermes and the Magic Oracles attributed to Zoroaſter, probably forged by the Modern Platoniſts. Plotinus wiſhed to have completed his ſtudies in Perſia and India. Falſe pretenſions of the Gnoſtics detected and expoſed by the followers of Ammonius. Note [*o*] - - - 131, 132
——— Ammonius and his diſciples ambitious of being termed Platoniſts. Reaſons that made them deſirous of acquiring for themſelves this title. Note [*p*] 132, 133
XXIX. The theoretical or ſpeculative philoſophy of Ammonius. - 135—138
——— The philoſophic ſyſtem of Ammonius built entirely on the Egyptian diſcipline. Note [*r*] - *ib.*
——— The diſcipline of Plato, although it differs from that of the Egyptians in many reſpects, yet perfectly agrees with it in others. Note [*t*] - 137
——— Difference between the Ammonian and Eclectic ſyſtems. Note [*u*] - 138
XXX. The Moral Philoſophy of Ammonius 138—141
——— Abſtinence and mortification of the body its leading features - - 139
——— The frequent occurrence of Chriſtian terms and phraſes in the writings of the

SECT. PAGE
XXX. the Modern Platoniſts accounted for. Note [x] - - - 140
—— That ſpecies of ſcience termed by the Modern Platoniſts *Theurgia* indiſputably of Egyptian origin. Auguſtin's explanation of it. Note [y] 141—143
XXXI. The ſentiments of Ammonius reſpecting the different popular religions. 142—145
——— The hiſtory of the Heathen Deities conſidered by him as altogether allegorical - - - - 143
XXXII. The tenets of Ammonius reſpecting Chriſt - - - 145—152
——— Notwithſtanding certain individual inſtances that may be cited to the contrary, the character of Chriſt was held in great eſteem by Ammonius and his followers. Our Saviour conſidered by them as a Theurgiſt or magician of the firſt rank. His character extolled by the Pagan oracles. According to the Platoniſts, he did not aboliſh, but merely reformed the worſhip, of the Heathen deities. Note [b] 145—150
——— Great addreſs manifeſted by the modern Platoniſts in reconciling the Egyptian and Platonic philoſophy with the religion of Chriſt. Note [c] - - - - - 150, 151
——— Cuſtomary for them to compare our bleſſed Saviour with Apollonius Tyanæus, Pythagoras, and other eminent philoſophers. Note [d] 152
XXXIII. Forced interpretations of the Scriptures - - - - 153—155
——— Four ſenſes of Scripture noticed by the Fathers of this century, viz. the literal, the allegorical, the tropological, and the anagogical. Note [e] - - - - 153, 154

Moſt

SECT. PAGE

XXXIII. Moſt of the early corruptions of Chriſtianity had their origin in Egypt. This country alſo gave birth to the practice of ſtraining paſſages of Scripture in ſupport of philoſophical maxims. Specimens of the manner in which Pantænus and Clement of Alexandria were accuſtomed to expound the Scriptures. The allegorical interpretation of Scripture a favourite practice with Philo Judæus, as alſo with the Phariſees and Eſſenes before his time. Note [f] 155—159

XXXIV. The practice ariſes of expounding Chriſtian tenets upon philoſophical principles. The ſecret diſcipline - - - 156—161

——— Endeavours uſed to reconcile what is lain down in Scripture as to certain leading points of Chriſtian belief, with the doctrine of Plato, Parmenides, and other eminent philoſophers. Note [g] - 159, 160

——— There exiſted amongſt the ancient Chriſtians not merely one but divers ſpecies of ſecret diſcipline. Theſe different kinds of ſecret diſcipline enumerated and deſcribed. Note [h] - - - - - 160—171

——— The ſecret diſcipline of a more comprehenſive nature than the myſtical theology. This latter appears to have compriſed merely the beſt and nobleſt part of the ſecret diſcipline. Note [i] - - - - 161

XXXV. Moral Theology aſſumes a two-fold character - - - 162—181

——— The firſt riſe of the Aſcetics not clearly to be aſcertained. The earlieſt were probably thoſe who merely renounced marriage. None of the reſt

SECT. PAGE
XXXV. reſt can be placed higher than this century. It is by no means certain that the Aſcetics were accuſtomed to diſtinguiſh themſelves from other Chriſtians by their dreſs. Note [k] - - - - 171—174
——— Myſtics and Myſticiſm had their origin long prior to the Chriſtian æra. The myſtic diſcipline aroſe out of the ancient philoſophy of the Egyptians, and was countenanced by the doctrine of Plato. The ſentiments of Philo Judæus in perfect harmony with thoſe of the Myſtics of more recent times. The Chriſtians become divided into "Operants" and "Quieſcents." The influence which country and climate have on men's morals and opinions. Myſticiſm the offspring of a burning climate. Note [l] - - - 174—181
——— Difference between Monks and the early Aſcetics. Origin of monaſteries and abbeys, anchorites or hermits, &c. The temperate climate of Europe unfriendly to Monachiſm. Note [m] - - - 181—184
XXXVI. Alteration in the form of divine worſhip - - - - 181—187
——— Various terms or phraſes made uſe of in the Heathen myſteries transferred and applied to different parts of the Chriſtian worſhip. Clement of Alexandria particularly fond of placing the rites of Chriſtianity on a parallel with the Heathen myſteries. The application of the term "Symbolum" to the Chriſtian profeſſion of faith, accounted for in this way. Note [n] - - - 186, 187
——— The adoption of Heathen rites, &c. by the

SECT. PAGE
XXXVI. the Chriſtians offers a wide field for the diſplay of literary talent. Liſt of authors by whom the ſubject has been incidentally noticed. Cauſes that probably influenced the Chriſtians in their adoption of theſe rites. Note [o] - - - 187, 188
XXXVII. Chriſtian writers of this century 188—192
——— Principal editions of the works of Irenæus. Note [p] - - 189
——— Principal editions of the works of Juſtin Martyr. Note [q] - *ibid.*
——— Principal editions of the works of Clement of Alexandria. Note [r] 190
——— Principal editions of the works of Theophilus, Tatian, and Athenagoras. Note [s] - - - 191
——— Principal editions of the works of Tertullian. Note [t] - - 192
XXXVIII. Riſe and propagation of Chriſtian ſects. Judaizing Chriſtians 192, 193
——— Reaſons which probably induced the greater part of the Chriſtians of Jewiſh origin under the reign of Hadrian to renounce altogether the ceremonies of the Moſaic law, and elect one Marcus for their biſhop. Note [u] - - - 193—198
XXXIX. The Nazarenes and Ebionites. 194—202
——— The Goſpel of the Nazarenes not the ſame with that of the Ebionites. Note [v] - - - - - 198
——— By the early writers, the Nazarenes are not ſpoken of as heretics. Whether the Nazarenes were anciently included under the denomination of Ebionites? The term "Nazarene" of a ſimilar import with Chriſtian. Note [w] - - - 199, 200
——— What opinion the Nazarenes entertained

SECT. PAGE
XXXIX. tained reſpecting Chriſt, not altogether clear. Note [x] - - 201
——— The Nazarenes conſidered no part of the Jewiſh law as obligatory, except the genuine Moſaic precepts. Their great veneration for St. Paul ſhews them not to have conſidered the Moſaic law as of general or perpetual obligation. Note [y] - 202
XL. The Ebionites - - 202—204
—— Origin of the term "Ebionites" uncertain. Probable that it had an alluſion to the poverty or indigence of thoſe by whom the ſect was founded. Note [z] - - - 202, 203
—— The Ebionites obſerved not only the Moſaic precepts, but alſo the ordinances engrafted thereon by the Phariſees and Doctors of the Law. The ſenſe in which we ought to underſtand what is ſaid by Irenæus of their having worſhipped the city of Jeruſalem. Note [a] - 204
XLI. Sects generated of the Oriental philoſophy - - - - 205—207
—— The Gnoſtic ſects did not emerge from obſcurity until the reign of Hadrian. Note [b] - - - - 206
—— The cauſe of Chriſtianity ſuſtained no little injury from its being believed by the Greeks and Romans that the maxims and tenets of the Gnoſtics were thoſe of the Chriſtians at large. Note [c] - - - - 207
XLII. Of the Gnoſtic ſects - 208, 209
—— The Gnoſtic ſects in all probability leſs numerous than they are repreſented to have been by the ancient Chriſtian writers. Note [d] - *ibid.*
XLIII. The Elceſaites - - - 210

SECT. PAGE
XLIV. The philoſophy of Saturninus 211—216
——— Saturninus was not a diſciple of Menander. Note [f] - - 211
——— The accounts given by ancient writers of the diſcipline of Saturninus confuſed and obſcure. An attempt to correct and overcome the errors and difficulties to which theſe imperfect accounts have given riſe. Note [g] - - - - - 213—215
——— Saturninus the firſt of the Gnoſtics that divided mankind into two claſſes; the one good, the other evil. Note [h] - - 215, 216
XLV. The Saturninian ſyſtem of Theology - - - - 216—220
——— The orthodox Chriſtians agreed with the Gnoſtics in aſſigning to the Heathen deities a real exiſtence; but differed from them with regard to the ſpiritual agents by whom mankind were ſeduced from their allegiance to the Supreme Deity. Note [i] - - - 216, 217
——— Various conſectaries with regard to the doctrine of Saturninus deducible from what is handed down to us reſpecting his tenets. Note [k] - - - - - 217, 218
——— Improbable that Saturninus ſhould have interdicted marriage and preſcribed an equal degree of abſtinence and mortification to all his diſciples. Note [l] - - 219
XLVI. The philoſophy of Baſilides 220—235
——— Of the writings and character of Baſilides; the time when he flouriſhed; and the authors from whom information reſpecting him is to be collected. He was not a diſciple of Menander. Note [m] - 220, 221

XLVI. He

SECT. PAGE
XLVI. He did not conſider matter as having a ruler peculiar to itſelf; nor did he believe in the exiſtence of angels naturally inclined to evil. Note [n] - - - 222
——— His Æons cannot properly be regarded in any other light than as real and diſtinct perſons. With reſpect to their ſexes and intermarriages, he ſeems to have entertained ſentiments equally groſs with others of the Gnoſtics. Note [o] 222—224
——— However abſurd it may appear, there can be no doubt but that Baſilides believed in the exiſtence of 365 heavens and an equal number of angelic orders. Note [p] - 224, 225
——— Of the name "Abraxas" or "Abraſax." Not ſtated by any ancient writer that this name was firſt invented by Baſilides. Its meaning involved in great obſcurity. The letters compoſing it expreſs the number 365. It appears to have been applied by Baſilides to the Supreme Lord of all the heavens. Chifflet, Beauſobre, and Jablonſky, wrong in imagining that it meant the ſun. Abraxas could have been none other than the firſt and greateſt of the angels ſuppoſed to have been generated of Sophia and Dynamis. Both this name and what are commonly termed Baſilidian gems were probably of Egyptian origin. Note [q] - 225—232
——— In what reſpects Baſilides and certain of the Gnoſtics differed in opinion from the reſt with regard to the founder of this world. Note [r] *ibid.*
——— Baſilides believed man to be poſſeſſed of two ſouls: the one brutal, the other rational. The manner in

SECT. PAGE
XLVI. which he accounted for the aſſociation of divine or rational ſouls with groſs material bodies. Note [s] 233, 234
——— The Baſilidians pretended to be in poſſeſſion of the prophecies of Cham, and the diſcourſes of Barcabba and Barcophus, and other ſimilar writings. Note [t] 235
XLVII. The Baſilidian ſyſtem of theology 235—243
——— That this world is governed by angels, and that each nation or kingdom hath its preſiding or ruling angel, a very ancient opinion amongſt the people of the Eaſt. Note [v] 236
——— Want of harmony between Irenæus and Clement of Alexandria with regard to the tenets of Baſilides reſpecting Chriſt. Clement the beſt deſerving of credit. Note [w] 238—243
——— Baſilides had not a peculiar Goſpel of his own. What parts of the New Teſtament were approved of by him, and what he rejected. He conſidered Chriſt as having propounded a two-fold diſcipline. Note [x] - - - - 243, 244
XLVIII. The moral doctrine of Baſilides 244—247
——— That Baſilides ſhould have recogniſed no diſtinction between good and bad actions, but countenanced his followers in every ſpecies of licentiouſneſs, entirely undeſerving of credit. His words on the contrary as quoted by Clement of Alexandria argue a great ſtrictneſs in point of morals. Note [y] - - 245
——— The diſſolute conduct of certain of the Baſilidians not imputable to the doctrine or precepts of their maſter. Note [z] - - - - 245, 246

XLVIII. The

SECT. PAGE
XLVIII. The diſſolute conduct of certain of the Baſilidians not imputable to the doctrine or precepts of their maſter. Note [z] - - - 245, 246
——— The opinion of Baſilides reſpecting the martyrs, excited conſiderable animoſity towards him amongſt the orthodox Chriſtians. A particular inveſtigation of the Baſilidian doctrine with regard to concealing one's religion, and even denying Chriſt in times of perſecution, partaking of meats offered to idols, avoiding martyrdom, &c. Note [a] 246—250
XLIX. The ſyſtem of Carpocrates - 248—252
——— What the ſentiments of Carpocrates were reſpecting the ſoul, very obſcure and uncertain. There is reaſon to think that in ſome reſpects they were very extraordinary and far different from thoſe entertained by the Gnoſtics. Note [c] - 251, 252
L. The Carpocratian theology 253—259
—— The notion that Carpocrates thought leſs reſpectfully of Chriſt than any others of the Gnoſtics erroneous. The Carpocratian ſentiments with regard to Chriſt as ſtated by Irenæus examined in detail. Note [d] 253—258
LI. The moral diſcipline of Carpocrates 259—265
—— There is a difficulty in believing that the moral doctrine of Carpocrates could have been ſo infamouſly groſs and vile as it is repreſented by ancient writers. Poſſibly we may be ſtrangers to certain particulars by which its apparent enormity might be greatly qualified. Note [e] 259—263.
—— The apotheoſis of Epiphanes the ſon of Carpocrates, by the people of

SECT. PAGE
LI. Sama, in all probability a mere fable. Note [f] - 263—265
—— Carpocrates maintained that his doctrine was built on the ſecret communications of Chriſt to his diſciples. He of courſe entertained no very high reſpect for the writings of the New Teſtament. Note [g] - - - 265, 266
LII. The ſyſtem of Valentine - 266—268
—— Notwithſtanding the very great attention beſtowed on it by ancient writers, the Valentinian ſyſtem is but partially intelligible. Valentine is ſaid to have been the pupil of Theodas, one of St. Paul's diſciples. Note [h] - - - 266, 267
—— It was not the diſappointment of his hopes with regard to a biſhopric, but the ſeverity of the Roman church that made Valentine a ſectary. Note [i] - 268—270
LIII. The Valentinian Æons - 269—276
—— Great difference of opinion has prevailed amongſt the learned with regard to the ſource from whence the Valentinian religion and philoſophy were derived. Valentine was unqueſtionably indebted for the firſt elements of his ſyſtem to the Oriental philoſophy. Note [k] - 270, 271
—— In what reſpects Valentine differed from the various other leaders of Gnoſtic ſects. With him the ſtudy of Chriſtianity preceded that of philoſophy: with them the caſe had been exactly the reverſe. Some curious ſpecimens of the mode in which he ſupported certain parts of his ſyſtem by a reference to the New Teſtament. Note [l] - 272, 273

LIII. Endeavours

SECT. PAGE

LIII. Endeavours of the learned to hit upon ſome interpretation of the Valentinian principles and tenets, that might reconcile them with reaſon and Chriſtianity. The attempt altogether an hopeleſs one. The Valentinian Æons, like thoſe of the other Gnoſtic ſects, can be conſidered in no other light than as real and diſtinct perſons. Note [*m*] 276—279

LIV. LV. The Valentinian Theology 277—285

—— The Deity was conſidered by all deſcriptions of the Gnoſtics and particularly by the Valentinians, as poſſeſſed of merely a limited degree of intelligence and power. They alſo believed him to be deſtitute of various qualities which right reaſon and the Scriptures point out as belonging to the Supreme Being. That the Æons therefore ſhould not have been deemed perfect can of courſe excite no ſurpriſe. Note [*n*] - 280

—— Achamoth not regarded by Valentine as the parent of matter, but merely as the author of certain modifications thereof. Note [*p*] - 283, 284

LVI. The Valentinian tenets reſpecting the Creation - - - 285, 286

—— Man, according to Valentine, compounded of a two-fold body and alſo of a two-fold ſoul. The Valentinians, like other Gnoſtics, denied the poſſibility of a future reſurrection of the body. The rational ſoul they held to be of neceſſity immortal. The fate of the ſenſitive ſoul depended on circumſtances. Note [*s*] - 286—288

SECT. PAGE
LVII. The Valentinian tenets reſpecting Chriſt - - - 287—294
The body aſſumed by Chriſt according to the Valentinians was different from that of an ordinary man. Chriſt, although conſidered by them as a ſpiritual being of the moſt exalted kind, yet not placed on an equal footing with the Father. They muſt have believed him to have actually ſuffered, and died. Note [u] - - - - 289—291
—— Valentine did not believe in Chriſt's having expiated the ſins of mankind by his death; but aſſerted that the only purpoſe of his advent was to communicate to our benighted race a knowledge of the true God. Note [v] - - - 292
—— The Valentinian ſyſtem agrees perfectly in not a few particulars with that of the Manichees. A ſummary or general view of the doctrine inculcated by the Oriental, the Gnoſtic, and the Manichæan ſchemes. Note [w] - 293, 294
—— The ſtatements of ancient authors with regard to the wickedneſs and crimes of the Valentinians, not applicable to the ſect in general. Valentine conſidered all men to be by nature equal; and the gate of ſalvation as irrevocably cloſed againſt none. His diſtribution of men into three claſſes explained. Note [x] - 294—297
LVIII. Inferior ſects that owed their origin to the Valentinian ſchool - 295—299
—— The belief, that the Supreme Being was not the author of the Jewiſh Law, confined to no one ſect of the Gnoſtics in particular, but indiſcri-

SECT. PAGE
LVIII. minately recognized by them all. Note [y] - - - - - 298
——— Difference of opinion between Ptolemy and Secundus with regard to the nature of the Æons. Note [z] 99
LIX. Marcus and Colarbasus - 300, 301
——— The tenets of Marcus prove him to have been a man entirely out of his wits. A specimen of his idle conceits respecting the force and properties of the Greek letters. Prayers dictated by the Marcosians to dying people, nearly similar to those of the Ophites. That Marcus should have practised sorcery, or had recourse to any delusive tricks, is undeserving of the smallest credit. What is recorded of his changing the colour of the sacramental wine, as also, of his filling the larger chalice from a smaller one, may readily be accounted for without supposing him to have used any deception. Note [b] - - - - - 301—306
LX. Bardesanes - - - 302—311
——— Notwithstanding the frequency with which the subject is adverted to by ancient writers, the history of the life and tenets of Bardesanes has come down to us involved in great uncertainty and doubt. Note [c] 307
——— Although he eventually renounced certain of his errors, he yet never thoroughly repudiated his heretical opinions. Note [d] - - 308
——— His opinion respecting the origin of the world and of mankind was different from that of Valentine and every other Gnostic leader. Note [e] *ibid.*
——— Certain particulars with regard to which the doctrine of Bardesanes appears

SECT. PAGE
LX. to have been hitherto miſunderſtood. Note [f] - 309—310
LXI. Tatian - - - - 311—314
—— His ſyſtem poſſeſſed ſomewhat of the Valentinian character, but its exact nature is not to be collected from any author - - - 312
—— His hiſtory undeſervedly ſlighted by ancient writers. Note [i] - *ibid.*
—— The auſterity of his moral diſcipline reached to the extent of enjoining the ſubſtitution of water for wine in the adminiſtration of the Euchariſt 313
—— A diſlike to wine prevalent amongſt the philoſophers of the Eaſt from a very remote period. In prohibiting the uſe of it, Mohammed merely enforced the obſervance of an ancient regulation. Note [l] - - *ibid.*
—— The naturally auſtere diſpoſition of the Syrians rendered them particularly friendly to the ſyſtem of Tatian. Note [m] - - - - 314
LXII. The Ophites or Serpentinians 314—317
—— Queſtionable how far various minor Gnoſtic ſects that are ſpoken of by ancient writers, ſuch as the Caſſianites, the Docetes, the Severians, the Apoſtolics, the Adamites, the Cainites, the Abelites, the Sethians, and the Florinians, had any real or diſtinct exiſtence. Note [n] 315,316
LXIII. Cerdo and Marcion - 318—322
—— All the accounts to be met with in ancient writers reſpecting theſe Hæreſiarchs very defective. The principal ſources from whence information as to them is to be derived. Note [p] - - - - 318, 319
—— What is ſaid by Epiphanius, of Marcion's having been excommunicated

SECT. PAGE
LXIII. for the ſeduction of a virgin, ought in all probability to be underſtood figuratively. Note [q] - 319—321
——— Marcion's expoſition of our Saviour's words reſpecting the not putting of new wine into old bottles. Note [r] - - - - - - *ibid.*
LXIV. The ſyſtem of Marcion - 322—326
——— Nothing beyond its leading features can now be aſcertained. It appears to have borne a ſtrong reſemblance to the diſcipline of the Manichees. Note [t] - - - 323, 324
——— The founder of this univerſe was conſidered by Marcion as a being entirely diſtinct from both the good and the evil deity. This Being he characterized by the epithet *Juſt*. Note [u] - - - - 324, 325
——— An attempt to ſupply certain particulars in the ſyſtem of Marcion, not noticed by ancient writers. Note [v] - - - - - 326
LXV. The tenets of Marcion reſpecting Chriſt - - - 326—331
——— Marcion admitted that the advent of a Meſſiah was predicted by the prophets of the Old Teſtament, and that ſuch Meſſiah would one day or other make his appearance; but denied that our bleſſed Saviour was the Meſſiah alluded to, and aſſerted that, in proclaiming himſelf as ſuch, Chriſt had practiſed a deception. Note [x] - - - - 327—329
——— He denied that Chriſt either ſuffered or died any otherwiſe than in appearance; but affirmed, that ſuch his apparent death was beneficial to the human race. The Marcionites ſet no value on life, and

SECT. PAGE
LXV. were diſtinguiſhed for the number and courage of their martyrs. Note [y] - - - - - 330
—— The very ſingular tenets of Marcion with regard to Chriſt's deſcent into hell. Note [z] - 330, 331
—— Two courſes of moral diſcipline recognized by the generality of the Gnoſtic ſects. A ſummary view of the chief points in regard to which theſe ſects were either agreed or at variance. Note [a] 331—333
LXVI. The hereſy of Montanus 332—339
—— Tertullian's teſtimony with regard to Montanus muſt be received with ſome caution. The hiſtory of the Montaniſts involved in much confuſion and obſcurity. The learned much divided in opinion as to the time of the origination of this ſect. An attempt to place the character of Montanus in its proper point of view. Note [b] - 333—335
—— Although Montanus appears to have been diſordered in his mind, it is ſcarcely credible that he could have been ſo infatuated as to pretend that the Holy Ghoſt was reſident in his perſon, or that his body was actually animated by the Holy Spirit in the place of a ſoul. Note [c] - 336
—— The biſhop of Rome (Victor), until undeceived by Praxeas, regarded Montanus in the light of a genuine prophet. Note [d] - - 337
—— The ſect of the Montaniſts had not become extinct even ſo low down as the 5th century. A liſt of imperial edicts relating to them. Note [e] 338
—— In his vindication of Montanus, Tertullian may rather be conſidered

SECT. PAGE
LXVI. as the advocate of himſelf and his own opinions. Note [f] - 339
LXVII. The errors of Montanus 339—352
——— The opinions of Montanus appear to have been perfectly orthodox with regard to the leading principles of Chriſtianity. His errors however were far from being of a light or trivial nature. He aſſerted that Chriſt and his apoſtles had left the moral law incomplete, and that he himſelf was commiſſioned of God to bring it to perfection. There are no grounds for charging him with Sabellianiſm. Note [g] 339—344
——— The improvements in moral diſcipline ſuggeſted by him, related merely to a greater ſtrictneſs in point of external demeanor. An inveſtigation of theſe improvements in detail. All of them were manifeſtly of a light and trifling nature. The Chriſtians did not take exception ſo much to his precepts in themſelves as to the importance which he attached to them. Note [h] 344—348
——— It was not his aſſuming the character of a prophet that cauſed the ſeparation between Montanus and the Catholic Chriſtians, but their believing him to be inſpired of the devil. Their reaſons for thinking thus of him. Montanus aſſerted that he and his followers conſtituted the only true church, and that every other was at enmity with God and the Holy Spirit. Note [i] 349—352
——— The prophecy of Montanus reſpecting the future judgment, which the Catholic Chriſtians appear to have been particularly anxious to mark

SECT. PAGE.
LXVII. with their diſapprobation, could not have related to the laſt general judgment, but muſt have pointed at the overthrow of the Roman Empire. Note [k] - 352—355
LXVIII. Praxeas - - - 353—362
——— For the hiſtory of Praxeas, we are of neceſſity conſtrained to rely wholly on Tertullian, his moſt inveterate enemy. It is not improbable that the error of Praxeas might have originated in his hoſtility to Montanus. Note [l] - - 355, 356
——— Praxeas denied the exiſtence of any real diſtinction of perſons in the Godhead. A particular inveſtigation of his tenets with regard to the divine nature. Note [m] 357—362
LXIX. Theodotus and Artemon 362—365
——— Ancient writers are far from being agreed in their expoſition of the tenets of Theodotus reſpecting Chriſt. It is by no means placed beyond a doubt, that Theodotus and Artemon entertained one and the ſame opinion on this ſubject. Note [o] - - - 363, 364
LXX. Hermogenes - - 365—369
——— The doctrine of Hermogenes reſpecting the eternity of matter not properly encountered by Tertullian. Although the former conſidered matter as coeval with the Deity; he nevertheleſs maintained that the Deity had from all eternity ruled over it. Note [s] - 367, 368
——— The opinion of Hermogenes that the ſouls of men as well as their bodies were compoſed of matter, accounted for on the ground of his believing matter to be the ſource of every evil deſire. Note [t] - 368, 369

SECT. PAGE

LXX. It is acknowledged even by Tertullian, that the tenets of Hermogenes reſpecting Chriſt, were found and orthodox. This hereſiarch appears to have been a different perſon from the Hermogenes mentioned by Clement of Alexandria in his *Eclogæ Propheticæ*, as alſo from that Hermogenes againſt whom Theophilus of Antioch and Origen wrote. Note [*u*] - - - - - 369

LXXI. } Controverſy reſpecting the Paſchal
LXXII. } obſervances - - 370—388

——— The cauſes and nature of this controverſy have been very generally miſunderſtood. The main point in diſpute was the propriety of the Chriſtians partaking of a Paſchal ſupper on the fourteenth day of the firſt Jewiſh month in commemoration of Chriſt's eating the Paſſover with his diſciples. Previouſly to the council of Nice the term *Paſcha* had a different meaning from what it has borne ſince. An attempt to place the nature of this controverſy in a juſt and perſpicuous point of view. Note [*v*.] - - - 371—384

——— Correction of an error in Valeſius's tranſlation of the words of Euſebius reſpecting Victor's excommunication of the Aſiatic Chriſtians. The biſhop of Rome did not at that time poſſeſs the power of cutting off whom he pleaſed from all communion with the church at large. Victor's excommunication of the Chriſtians of Aſia Minor extended merely to the excluſion of them from all

SECT. PAGE
LXXII. communion with himself and the church of Rome. His example was not followed by the other bishops. Note [z.] - - - 385—388

ERRATA.

Page 15, in margin, for *Germany*, read *German*.
—— 28, line 25, after γένεσθαι, add ἡ γὰρ φυσιωθεῖσα ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου ἀμαρτία καὶ σωτῆρος χρείαν ὁ λαὸς ἀυτοῦ ἴσχι
—— 49, — 31, dele *be*.
—— 61, — 37, for *Chriſtian*, read *Chriſtians*.
—— 66, — 38, for *the*, read *they*.
—— 67, — 33. for *ſeverity*, read *ſerenity*.
—— 165, — 9, for *ſet*, read *ſed*.
—— 166, in margin, for *aſſume*, read *aſſumes*.
—— 167, *ibid.* for *more*, read *moral*.
—— 171, line 32, for *celebacy*, read *celibacy*.
—— 172, — 19, for *countenancing*, read *counteracting*.
—— 173, — 22, for *ſuch of, them*, read *ſuch of them*.
—— 178, — 35, for *Egytians*, read *Egyptians*.
—— 183, — 22, for *aliſe*, read *a life*.
—— 189, — 13, for *hereſes*, read *hæreſes*.
—— 225, — 10, for *in the mind*, read *into the mind*.
—— 307, — 22, for *Welſen*, read *Welſten*.
—— 359, line antepenult. for βλασφημσηαι, read βλασφημησαι.
Paſſim, for *intrinſically*, read *intrinſecally*.

THE

THE

ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY

OF THE

SECOND CENTURY.

I. THE Chriſtian religion, which in the courſe of the former age had made its way throughout a conſiderable portion of the world, and pervaded nearly the whole of the Roman empire, was, in the century on which we are now about to enter, by the zeal and incredible exertions of its teachers, ſtill more widely diffuſed, and propagated even amongſt thoſe nations, which on account of their ferocity and the loathſomeneſs of their manners were juſtly regarded with horror by the reſt. Being deſtitute of any documents on the ſubject that can properly be relied on, it is impoſſible for us, with any degree of exactneſs, to ſpecify, either the time, circumſtances, or immediate authors, of this further diffuſion of the bleſſings of the goſpel, or particularly to diſtinguiſh the provinces which had hitherto remained uncheered by, and now firſt received, the light of celeſtial truth, from thoſe to which it had been communicated in the former century. We muſt reſt ſatisfied therefore with being able to aſcertain, in a general way, from the unexceptionable teſtimony of writers of theſe and the following

CENT. II.

Propagation of the Chriſtian religion.

 times,

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Propagation of the Chriſtian religion.

times, that the limits of the church of Chriſt were, in this age, extended moſt widely; in ſo much indeed, as to make them correſpond very nearly with the confines of the then known habitable world [*a*].

II. The

[*a*] Some very ſtriking paſſages reſpecting the amplitude and extent of the Chriſtian community, are to be met with in the works of thoſe moſt excellent writers of the ſecond century, Juſtin Martyr, Irenæus, and Tertullian, writers, of whom it is not too much to ſay, that they are, in general, moſt deſerving of unlimited credit. Ἃ δὲ ἐν ſays Juſtin, (*Dialog. cum Tryphone*, p. 341. edit. Jebbian.) γὰρ ὅλως ἐϛὶ τὸ γένος ἀνθρώπων, εἴτε βαρβάρων, εἴτε Ἑλλήνων, εἴτε ἁπλῶς ὡτινῶν ὀνόματι προσαγορευομένων, ἢ ἀμαζόβιον, ἢ ἀοίκων καλουμένων, ἢ ἐν σκηναῖς κτηνοτρόφων οἰκούντων, ἐν οἷς μὴ διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ ϛαυρωθέντος Ἰησοῦ, ἐυχαὶ καὶ ἐυχαριϛίαι τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ποιητῇ τῶν ὅλων γίνονται. *Ne unum quidem eſt genus mortalium, ſive barbarorum, ſive Græcorum, ſeu etiam aliorum omnium, quocumque appellentur nomine, vel in plauſtris degentium, vel domo carentium, vel in tentoriis viventium, et pecoribus vitam tolerantium, inter quos per nomen crucifixi Jeſu ſupplicationes, et gratiarum actiones patri et fabricatori omnium non fiant.*——Subſequently, at p. 351. he again expreſſes himſelf much to the ſame purport, though in fewer words. Now admitting, what indeed is too obvious to be denied, that there is in this ſomewhat of exaggeration, ſince long after the age of Juſtin, there were many nations of the earth, which had not been brought to a knowledge of Chriſt, ſtill there could have been no room for this very exaggeration, had not the Chriſtian religion been at that time moſt extenſively diffuſed throughout the world. Irenæus, diſputing with the Valentinians, (lib. i. *adv. Hæreſ.* cap. x. p. 48. edit. Maſſuet.) oppoſes to them the entire Chriſtian church, which he repreſents as extended throughout the whole world, even to the uttermoſt bounds of the earth. From this immenſe multitude of Chriſtians in the general, he then ſelects certain particular churches widely ſeparated from each other in point of ſituation, and ſets them in oppoſition to his adverſaries. Καὶ ὅτε αἱ ἐν Γερμανίαις ἱδρυμέναι ἐκκλησίαι ἄλλως πιϛεύουϛιν, ἢ ἄλλως παραδιδόασιν, ὅτε ἐν ταῖς Ἰβηριαις, ὅτε ἐν Κελτοις, ὅτε κατὰ τὰς ἀνατολὰς, ὅτε ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ, ὅτε ἐν Λιβύῃ, ὅτε αἱ κατὰ μέϛα τοῦ κόϛμου ἱδρυμέναι. *Ac neque hæ quæ in Germaniis ſitæ ſunt Eccleſiæ aliter credunt,*

II. The name of one of thoſe, however, who devoted themſelves to the propagation of the goſpel

CENT. II.

Miſſion of Pantænus to India.

credunt, aut aliter tradunt, nec quæ in Hiberiis, aut Celtis, neque hæ quæ in oriente, neque hæ quæ in Ægypto, neque hæ quæ in Libya, neque hæ quæ in medio mundi conſtitutæ. In ſupport of the doctrine then for which he is contending, we ſee Irenæus here calls to witneſs churches from all the three grand diviſions of the world which were at that time known. From Europe, the Germanic, the Iberian or Spaniſh, and the Celtic or Gauliſh. He himſelf lived amongſt the Celts, and was a near neighbour to the Germans and Iberians; and muſt conſequently have been moſt intimately acquainted with the ſituation of Chriſtian affairs in thoſe parts. From Aſia he adduces the churches of the Eaſt, by which I conceive him to mean thoſe which had been planted at the eaſtern extremity of Aſia. Finally, from Africa he calls to his ſupport, the churches of Egypt and Libya. To what churches he alludes when he ſpeaks of thoſe "ſituated in the centre of the world," it is not very eaſy to ſay. The commentators on Irenæus would have us to underſtand him as having in view the churches of Paleſtine, ſince it appears that anciently Paleſtine was, by ſome, conſidered as ſituated in the centre of the world. How far this may be juſt I am unable to ſay. Poſſibly the world κοσμος, or world, might be put by Irenæus, as it is by others of the ancient writers, for the Roman empire. Annexing this ſenſe to the word, the centre of the world would be Italy, which was as it were the heart of the Roman empire. Another interpretation has been offered to the world by Gabriel Liron, a learned monk, of the order of the Benedictines, (*Singularitès Hiſtoriques et Litteraires*, tom. iv. p. 197.) who ſuppoſes that by the centre of the world was meant Aſia Minor, Greece, Thrace, Illyricum, Pannonia, Italy and the Iſles; in ſhort all thoſe parts which were ſurrounded by the countries which he had before enumerated. Tertullian gives a more copious liſt than Irenæus, of the nations that had embraced Chriſtianity, although perhaps less to be depended on. *In quem enim alium*, ſays he, (in lib. *adv. Judæos*, c. vii. p. 212. edit. Rigalt.) *univerſæ gentes crediderunt, niſi in Chriſtum qui jam venit? Cui enim et*, (there ſeems to be ſome deficiency or corruption of the text in this place,) *aliæ gentes crediderunt: Parthi, Medi, Elamitæ, et qui inhabitant*

CENT. II.

pel amongſt the nations of the eaſt, has been tranſmitted to poſterity, *viz.* that of Pantænus, a man of

Miſſion of Pantænus to India.

bitant Meſopotamiam, Armeniam, Phrygiam, Cappadociam, et incolentes Pontum, et Aſiam, et Pamphyliam: immorantes Ægyptum, et regionem Africæ quæ eſt trans Cyrenem inhabitantes? Romani et incolæ; tunc et in Hieruſalem Judæi et cæteræ gentes: ut jam Getulorum varietates, et Maurorum multi fines: Hiſpaniarum omnes termini, et Galliarum diverſæ nationes, et Britannorum inacceſſa Romanis loca, Chriſto vero ſubdita, et Sarmatarum, et Dacorum, et Germanorum, et Scytharum, et abditarum multarum gentium et provinciarum et inſularum multarum nobis ignotarum, et quæ enumerare minus poſſumus: in quibus omnibus locis Chriſti nomen, qui jam venit, regnat. Conſidering this paſſage as perfectly explicit, and every way worthy of credit, various of the learned have not heſitated on the faith of it, to pronounce that the Chriſtian religion had, at this time obtained for itſelf a footing in all the different nations here enumerated. For my own part were I to follow them in this, it would not be without a ſtrong apprehenſion that I might plunge myſelf into difficulties not eaſily to be ſurmounted. In fact, it appears to me, that Tertullian puts on here a little of the rhetorician, as he does in many other parts of his writings, and relates ſome things which it ſhould ſtrangely puzzle me, or any one elſe to demonſtrate. In the firſt place, it is to be remarked, that the middle part of the above paſſage is taken from the Acts of the Apoſtles, and that, with the exception of the Armenians, it exhibits a catalogue of preciſely the ſame nations as are enumerated by the Jews who had heard the Apoſtles ſpeak in foreign tongues, Acts, ii. 8, 9. From what the Jews are there recorded to have ſaid, Tertullian ſeems to have conceived what carries on its very face the marks of abſurdity, namely, that all the nations of whom thoſe devout Jews there make mention, were at once induced to embrace the Chriſtian faith. It is next obſervable, that what Tertullian here ſays of Chriſtianity having in his time been profeſſed by divers nations of the Gauls, is directly contrary to the fact. In the time of Tertullian, the church of Gaul had attained to no degree of ſtrength or ſize, but was quite in its infancy, and confined within the limits of one individual nation, as the inhabitants of the country themſelves acknowledge. What he adds about Chriſt being acknowledged in thoſe parts of Britain

to

of eminent abilities, and one by whom the cauſe of Chriſtianity was, in various ways, conſiderably benefited. Having applied himſelf with diligence to the cultivation of letters and philoſophy, and preſided for a while with diſtinguiſhed credit over the Chriſtian ſchool at Alexandria, he at length, either on the ſuggeſtion of his own mind, or by the command of Demetrius his biſhop, engaged in a miſſion to the Indians, who had about this time manifeſted a wiſh for Chriſtian inſtruction, and communicated to them that ſaving knowledge, of which they ſtood in need. To which of the many nations comprehended by the ancients, under the general title of Indians, it was that Pantænus thus went, has been made the ſubject of diſpute. My own opinion is, that this miſſion originated in an application made to the biſhop of Alexandria by certain Jews who were ſettled in Arabia Felix, and who had been originally converted to Chriſtianity by Bartholomew, requeſting that a teacher might be ſent them for the purpoſe of renovating and keeping alive amongſt them the true religion, which for want of ſuch aſſiſtance had gone much to decay, and was viſibly every day ſtill further on the decline.

Miſſion of Pantænus to India.

to which the Roman arms had not penetrated, is ſtill wider removed from the truth. Finally, his aſſerting that many unexplored nations and unknown iſlands and provinces had embraced Chriſtianity, moſt plainly evinces that he ſuffered himſelf to be carried away by the warmth of imagination, and did not ſufficiently attend to what he was committing to paper. For how could it be poſſible that Tertullian ſhould have been brought acquainted with what was done in unexplored regions and unknown iſlands and provinces? In fact, inſtead of feeling his way by means of certain and approved teſtimony, he appears, in this inſtance, to have become the dupe of vague and indiſtinct rumour.

CENT. II.

Miſſion of Pantænus to India.

If this conjecture of mine be well founded, it muſt of neceſſity follow, that thoſe are in an error who conceive that India obtained her firſt knowledge of the Goſpel through Pantænus [*b*].

III. Turning

[*b*] For whatever we know of the ſacred legation of Pantænus to the Indians, we are indebted to Euſebius and Jerome; between whom, however, there is ſome little difference of narration reſpecting it. By the former, in his *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. v. cap. x. p. 175. Pantænus is repreſented as having, on the ſuggeſtion of his own mind, undertaken a journey amongſt the people of the eaſt, for the purpoſe of converting them to Chriſtianity, and to have extended his travels even as far as the Indians. The latter, in his *Catal. Scriptor. Eccleſiaſt.* cap. xxxvi. p. 107. ed. Fabric. & *Epiſtol.* lxxxiii. p. 656. tom. iv. opp. part ii. ed. Benedict. reports that certain delegates had been diſpatched by the Indians to Alexandria, requeſting of Demetrius the biſhop of that city, that a Chriſtian inſtructor might be ſent them; and that Demetrius acceding to their wiſhes, directed Pantænus the prefect of the Alexandrian ſchool to accompany thoſe men on their return. If then we give credit to Euſebius, we muſt underſtand Pantænus as having voluntarily, and purely out of love towards God, undertaken the labour of diſſeminating a knowledge of the goſpel amongſt divers of the barbarous nations of the eaſt, including even the Indians: if on the contrary we take Jerome for our guide, it ſhould ſeem that he was ſent by his biſhop on a ſpecial miſſion to the Indians, and to none beſides. Poſſibly it may not be very difficult to bring about a reconciliation between theſe two accounts. Pantænus had, probably at the inſtigation of his own mind, gone forth with a view to the converſion of ſome of the more neighbouring nations, and, perhaps met with ſome ſucceſs. Whilſt he was thus employed, the Indian delegates, in all likelihood, arrived at Alexandria, requeſting that a Chriſtian inſtructor might be ſent to their countrymen; and Demetrius having received the moſt ample teſtimony of his knowledge, faith, and zeal, pitched upon this ſame Pantænus as the moſt proper perſon to accompany them on their return. But ſince it is well known that the Greek and Latin writers gave the title of Indians to many of the more remote eaſtern nations,

III. Turning to the European provinces, we find it acknowledged by the beſt informed French nations, of whom little or nothing was known, and alſo occaſionally made uſe of the term to denote the Perſians, Parthians, Medes, Ethiopians, Libyans, Arabians, and others, as is not unuſual with us at this day, the learned have made it a queſtion what Indians thoſe were to whom a knowledge of the goſpel was imparted by Pantænus. Moſt of them imagine that the ſcene of his labours muſt have been the country of India Magna which is watered by the Indus, and which we now term Eaſtern India; an opinion that ſeems to be countenanced by Jerome, who ſays that Pantænus was ſent to the Brachmans. *Miſſus eſt* ſays he, in his 83d Epiſtle *in Indiam ut Chriſtum apud Brachmanas et illius gentis philoſophos prædicaret.* For Brachmans or Bramins is the title by which the wiſe men of India Magna are diſtinguiſhed to this day; but by the ancients the term Brachmanus was applied in a manner equally vague and ambiguous with that of Indians, and it appears to be not at all unlikely that Jerome might, in this inſtance, have no authority but his own fancy for what he ſaid. Thoſe illuſtrious ſcholars, Hen. Valeſius, L. Holſtenius, and others, have therefore rather thought that it was to the Abyſſinians or Ethiopians that Pantænus went, ſince the appellation of Indians, (a title which they are ſtill fond of retaining) was given alſo to theſe people by the ancients: and in addition to this, they are as it were, next door neighbours to the Egyptians, and keep up a conſtant commercial intercourſe with them. See Baſnage—*Annal. Politico-Eccleſiaſt.* tom. ii. p. 207. Hen. Valeſius, *Adnotat. ad Socratis Hiſtor. Eccleſ.* p. 13. For my own part, I can fall in with neither of theſe opinions; for my belief is that thoſe Indians, who requeſted to have a teacher ſent them by Demetrius the biſhop of Alexandria, were neither pagans nor ſtrangers to Chriſtianity, but Jews, who had ſettled in that part of Arabia, called by the Greeks and Romans Arabia Felix, and by the people of the eaſt Hyemen; and who had previouſly been brought to a knowledge of Chriſt and his word. My reaſon for thinking thus is, that Jerome ſays, Pantænus found amongſt them the Goſpel of St. Matthew in Hebrew, and brought it back to Alexandria with him, and that they had received this book from Bartholomew one of the twelve apoſtles, who had "preached amongſt

CENT II.

Origin of the Gallic, German, and Engliſh churches.

CENT. II.

Origin of the Gallic, German, and Engliſh churches.

French writers, that their country, which anciently bore the name of Tranſalpine Gaul, was not bleſſed with the light of the goſpel until this century, when a knowledge of the religion of Chriſt was firſt communicated to their rude forefathers by Pothinus, who, together with Irenæus, and certain other devout men, had travelled into Gaul from Aſia. There are not wanting ſome, however, who would carry up the origin of the Gallic church to the apoſtles themſelves or their immediate diſciples [*c*]. From Gaul it ſeems proba-

amongſt them the coming of Jeſus Chriſt." *Catalog. Scriptor. Eccleſiaſt.* c. xxxvi. p. 107. It is apparent therefore that the people to whom Pantænus went, were not ſtrangers to Chriſtianity, as alſo that they were ſkilled in the Hebrew language, and were conſequently of Jewiſh extraction. For ſince Bartholemew left with them one of the goſpels written in Hebrew, it unavoidably follows, that they muſt have been acquainted with the Hebrew tongue. Had they been ignorant of the Hebrew, what end could it have anſwered to make them a preſent of a book in that language? It only remains then for me to ſhew that theſe ſame Jews were inhabitants of Arabia Felix. And in this I feel no ſort of difficulty whatever, in as much as it can clearly be aſcertained that this part of India was the ſcene of Bartholomew's labours. For let any one only be at the pains of comparing together the teſtimony of ancient authors, reſpecting that India, to which a knowledge of Chriſt and his word was firſt imparted by Bartholomew, and not the ſhadow of a doubt can remain with him, as to its having been Arabia Felix, which we well know was one of the countries included under the title of India by the ancients. See Tillemont, *in Vita Bartholomæi. Mem. Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt.* tom. i. p. 1160, 1161.

[*c*] The moſt eminent of the French writers have at different times engaged in diſputes of conſiderable warmth, reſpecting the antiquity and origin of the Gallic church. There appears to be three different opinions on the ſubject, each of which has found its advocates. (I.) That to which we have above given the precedence, has been defended with great ability and learning by the very celebrated Jo.

probable that Chriſtianity paſſed into Ciſ-rhenane Germany, at that time under the dominion of the

CENT. II.

Origin of the Gallic, German, and Engliſh churches.

Jo. Launois, in various tracts which are to be found in the firſt part of the ſecond volume of the joint edition of his works. So cogent indeed are the arguments of this illuſtrious writer, that his opinion has been embraced by almoſt every one in France who makes pretenſion either to ſuperior wiſdom, ingenuity, or learning. Vid. *Hiſtoire Litteraire de la France*, tom. i. p. 223, & ſeq. This opinion moreover is ſupported by the authority of no leſs than three moſt reſpectable ancient hiſtorians; of whom the firſt is Sulpitius Severus, who in ſpeaking of the perſecution which the Chriſtians of Lyons and Vienne ſuffered, under the emperor Marcus Antoninus, (*Hiſtor. Sacr.* lib. ii. cap. 32. p. 246.) adds, *ac tum primum inter Gallias martyria viſa, ſerius tranſalpes Dei religione ſuſcepta.* The next is the author of *The Acts of Saturninus*, biſhop of Tholouſe, who ſuffered martyrdom in the third century, under the reign of the emperor Decius, a work that is generally ſuppoſed to have been written in the beginning of the fourth century.—According to this writer, the churches that had been founded in France were but few and ſmall even in the third century. Vid. Theod. Ruinart. *Acta Martyrum Sincera et Selecta*, p. 130. The third is Gregory of Tours, the parent of French hiſtory, who relates, (*Hiſtor. Francor.* lib. i. cap. xxviii. p. 23, & *de Gloria Confeſſorum*, cap. xxx. p. 399. ed. Ruinart), that under the reign of Decius there were ſeven men ſent from Rome into France for the purpoſe of preaching the goſpel. Theſe ſeven then, it is obſervable, are the very ones which popular tradition pronounces to have been the companions of the apoſtles Paul and Peter, and amongſt them is that Dionyſius the firſt biſhop of Paris, whom the French formerly maintained to have been Dionyſius the Areopagite. (II.) By thoſe however who think it of greater importance to uphold ancient notions and magnify the conſequence of France, than to aſcertain the truth, an origin by far more auguſt is aſſigned to the Gallic church, and the apoſtles Peter and Paul themſelves are pronounced to have been its founders. According to them, the laſt mentioned of theſe apoſtles traverſed a conſiderable part of Gaul in his way into Spain; and Luke and Creſcens were afterwards diſpatched by him on a miſſion to the Gauls; and the church of Paris owed its foundation to Dionyſius the Areopagite, an immediate diſciple of his, of whom mention

CENT. II.

the Romans, and was alſo transferred to the oppoſite ſhores of Britain, although it is inſiſted on by

Origin of the Gallic, German, and Engliſh churches.

tion is made in the Acts of the Apoſtles. St. Peter likewiſe, they ſay, ſent his diſciple Trophimus into Gaul, and St. Philip laboured in the converſion of a part of it himſelf. And, as if all this were not enough, they will have it, that ſome of the moſt renowned prelates of the different Gallic churches, ſuch as Paul of Narbonne, Martial of Limoges, and Saturnine of Thouloufe, had, before their coming into France, enjoyed the benefit of the apoſtles' ſociety and inſtruction. See the epiſtle of the eminent Peter de Marc, *de Evangelii in Gallia Initiis*, which Valeſius has prefixed to his edition of Euſebius. It muſt be confeſſed indeed, that the number of thoſe who perſiſt in maintaining the authenticity of all theſe particulars, is at present conſiderably reduced; for the fact is, that in ſupport of a great part of them nothing better can be avouched than the teſtimony of obſcure characters altogether unworthy of credit, or perhaps conjecture, or ſome vague tradition; in ſhort, nothing but evidences of the moſt uncertain and unſatisfactory nature. (III.) There are however to be found in France, men by no means deficient in learning, who will defend the above way of thinking with ſome limitation, and who, although they are ready to give up ſuch of the abovementioned facts as are unſupported by authority, will yet not hear of ſurrendering that grand citadel of eccleſiaſtical pre-eminence, the apoſtolic origin of the Gallic church. The arguments of Launois, Sirmond, and Tillemont, they will allow, place it beyond all diſpute, that the celebrated Dionyſius, the firſt biſhop of Paris, concerning whoſe body ſuch violent diſputes have taken place between the Benedictine monks of St. Emmeran at Ratiſbon, and the French monks of St. Dionyſius, was not the perſon whom the French, from the ninth century, have believed him to have been, *viz.* Dionyſius the Areopagite, one of St. Paul's diſciples, but a very different man who flouriſhed in the third century. They are alſo willing to admit that the vulgar tradition about the coming of Philip and other holy men into Gaul, is altogether undeſerving of credit; and finally, that the greater part of the churches in that country which pretend to an apoſtolical foundation, were not in reality founded until long after the apoſtolic times. But the three following points they can on no account be brought to relinquiſh; firſt, that the great apoſtle of the Gentiles in his way into Spain tarried for

by not a few of the Germans, that their church owes its foundation to certain of the immediate com-

CENT II.

Origin of the Gallic, German, and Engliſh churches.

for ſome time in Gaul; ſecondly, that Luke and Creſcens were diſpatched by him on a miſſion to the Gauls; and laſtly, that ſo early as the ſecond century, there had been founded in Gaul many other Chriſtian churches beſides thoſe of Lyons and Vienne. No one, that I know of, has diſplayed greater diligence and ability in ſupport of this laſt way of thinking than Gabriel Liron a Benedictine monk of great erudition, in his Diſſertation *ſur l'Etabliſſement de la Religion Chretienne dans les Gaules;* which nearly fills the fourth volume of a work publiſhed by him, under the title of *Singularitès Hiſtoriques & Litteraires.* Paris, 1740, 8vo. It has alſo been defended by Dion. Sammarthanus in the preface to his *Gallia Chriſtiana.* For my own part I muſt ſay, that neither of theſe ways of thinking appears to me to be in all reſpects well-founded or unexceptionable. On the ſecond, it cannot be neceſſary to make any remark, ſince it is ſupported by ſcarcely any one of the preſent day, except ſuch as are intereſted in upholding the credit of a parcel of old ſtories, to which the churches are indebted for a great part of their riches. In ſupport of the third, there appears to be many things yet un-eſtabliſhed, that may with the ſtricteſt juſtice be called for. Admitting it for inſtance to be certain, what in point of fact we know to be moſt uncertain, that St. Paul made a journey into Spain, it yet by no means follows of neceſſity that he muſt have gone through Gaul in his way thither; for it is very poſſible that he might have made the journey by ſea. For Luke's ever having been in Gaul we have no authority but that of Epiphanius, (in *Hæreſ.* lib. i. § xi. p. 433.), a writer, to ſay no worſe of him, of very indifferent credit, and by no means determinate in his way of ſpeaking. For the word Gaul is here put by him abſolutely, and we are conſequently left utterly in the dark as to whether he means Tranſalpine or Ciſalpine Gaul. Dionyſius Petavius indeed (*Animadverſ. ad Epiphanium,* p. 90.) ſuſpects, and not without reaſon, that Ciſalpine Gaul was the country meant. In proof of the miſſion of Creſcens, the words of St. Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 10. are cited, in which the learned advocates for this legation contend, that inſtead of Γαλατίαν, as moſt copies have it, we ought to read with Epiphanius, Γαλλίαν. But even ſuppoſing that we were to yield to them in this, for our doing of which however nothing like a ſufficient reaſon could readily

CENT. II. companions and diſciples of St. Peter and the other

Origin of the Gallic, German, and Engliſh churches.

readily be aſſigned, ſtill here again the queſtion would ariſe, as to whether it was Tranſalpine or Ciſalpine Gaul that was meant. Poſſibly it may be true, although it cannot be abſolutely proved to be ſo, that in the ſecond century there were in Gaul, ſeveral churches beſides thoſe which we know to have been at that time eſtabliſhed at Lyons and Vienne. But allowing this to be ever ſo certain, ſtill it is not concluſive as to the main point in diſpute, namely, whether or not the light of the goſpel was firſt communicated to the people of Tranſalpine Gaul by the apoſtles themſelves and their companions and diſciples. To the opinion firſt above noticed, *viz.* that the Gauls were not acquainted with the name of Chriſt prior to the arrival of Pothinus and his companions from the eaſt, although it has very illuſtrious patrons on its ſide, there yet ſeems wanting ſome further ſupport. The celebrated paſſage which we have cited from Sulpitius Severus, and concerning which ſuch great diſputes have taken place amongſt the learned, can certainly authorize no further inference than this, that the Chriſtian religion was communicated at a later period to the Gauls than to the countries of Aſia and the reſt of Europe. So that it amounts not to any thing like a proof that the glad tidings of Chriſtianity had never reached the Gauls until the arrival of Pothinus, Irenæus, and their companions, in the ſecond century. From the acts of Saturninus it is clear, that the religion of Chriſt made but a ſlow progreſs in Gaul, and that under the reign of Decius, in the third century, there were only a few ſmall churches ſcattered about here and there throughout the country, the major part of the inhabitants not having renounced idolatry even at that period. But this ſurely throws no obſtacle whatever in the way of any one's believing that ſome of the apoſtles or their diſciples had journied into Gaul, and that a part of that country had embraced Chriſtianity prior to the ſecond century. The paſſages referred to in Gregory of Tours, moſt aſſuredly poſſeſs conſiderable force when oppoſed to the idle notions formerly entertained by the French reſpecting Dionyſius the Areopagite, Trophimus, Martial, and others, as alſo in demonſtrating the futility of the pretenſions which many of the Gallic churches make to an apoſtolic foundation.—They alſo prove that the number of Chriſtians in Gaul prior to the time of Decius was comparatively trifling; but all this is not ſhewing that thoſe are in error who contend

CENT. II.

pther apoſtles (*d*); and the inhabitants of Britain would rather have us, with reſpect to the introduction

Origin of the Gallic, German, and Engliſh churches.

tend that the way of ſalvation was firſt made known to the Gauls by one of the apoſtles themſelves, or by men who had enjoyed the benefit of the apoſtles' converſe and inſtruction. Upon the whole, when I take into conſideration the unbounded zeal diſplayed by our Lord's apoſtles in the propagation of his religion, I muſt own I find no little difficulty in perſuading myſelf that a province of ſuch extent and conſequence, and no farther diſtant from Italy, could have been altogether neglected by them, and never invited to liſten to the terms of ſalvation propounded by their divine maſter.—Were I to be called upon then for a ſummary ſtatement of my opinion on the ſubject I ſhould ſay, peradventure Luke, peradventure Creſcens, peradventure one even of the apoſtles themſelves, might have taken a journey into Gaul with a view to the converſion of the natives. Theſe primary efforts, by whomſoever made, were certainly attended with but very little ſucceſs. In the ſecond century Pothinus, with certain companions, arriving out of Aſia, experienced a more propitious reception, and ſucceeded in eſtabliſhing a ſmall church at Lyons. This little aſſembly of Chriſtians however, inſtead of increaſing, went, in the courſe of time from various cauſes, much to decay, and the ſeven men, who according to Gregory of Tours, were ſent from Rome into Gaul, under the reign of the emperor Decius, may be ſaid to have found the Gallic church in a ſtate little better than that of abſolute ruin, and to have given to it as it were a ſecond foundation. With this opinion the indefatigable Tillemont nearly coincides, in his *Memoires pour ſervir a l'Hiſtoire de l'Egliſe*, tom. iv. p. 983.

[*d*] Both Irenæus and Tertullian, as we have above ſeen, § 1. note [*a*] make expreſs mention of the German churches. From neither of theſe writers, however, is the leaſt information to be obtained as to whether theſe churches were founded in this or the preceding century, or any thing collected that might lead us to form a judgment of their number and ſize. Even the part of Germany in which they were ſituated is not indicated. This ſilence has afforded to the German antiquaries a very ample field for diſpute. The moſt learned and ſagacious of them imagine, that the greater or Tranſ-rhenane Germany, which was very little known to the Romans, did not receive the light of the goſpel in this century nor for many ages afterwards; and therefore

CENT. II.

troduction of Chriſtianity into their country, receive the account of Bede, who repreſents Lucius,

Origin of the Gallic, German, and Engliſh churches.

therefore that the churches mentioned by Irenæus and Tertullian muſt have been ſituated in Ciſ-rhenane Germany, which was ſubject to the Roman government. Jo. Erneſt. Grabe takes exception to this opinion, in his annotations on the paſſage in Irenæus under conſideration; but as it appears to me on very light grounds.—For what he ſuggeſts is, that as Irenæus does not ſpeak of Germany but of the Germanies, εν χαις Γερμανιαις, it is to be ſuppoſed that in his time there had been Chriſtian churches eſtabliſhed throughout the whole of Germany. But a man of his erudition ought ſurely to have recollected that Irenæus might without any impropriety ſpeak thus of Ciſ-rhenane Germany, which, as is well known, had been divided by the Romans into the firſt and ſecond, or Superior and Inferior Germany. Until therefore the opinion of the eminent men above alluded to, ſhall be oppoſed by arguments of greater force than this, its credit will remain unſhaken. Other arguments indeed have been brought forward by Jo. Nichol. ab Hontheim, in his *Hiſtoria Trevirenſis Diplomatica*, tom. i. *Diſſert. de Æra Epiſcopatus Trevirenſis*, p. 10, & ſeq., where he lays it down that the paſſage in Tertullian ought to be underſtood as relating to that part of Eaſtern Germany which borders on Sarmatia and Dacia; and the paſſage in Irenæus as relating to the whole of Germany. But theſe arguments, unleſs I am altogether deceived, carry no greater weight with them than that of Grabe does, and ſerve only to demonſtrate the author's fertile and happy talent at conjecture. Marcus Hanſitzius is ſpoken of by him with approbation, as maintaining the ſame opinion in his *Germania Sacra*; but in this I think his memory muſt have deceived him, for I can find nothing of the kind ſaid by Hanſitzius in the place referred to. A greater queſtion is as to the antiquity and origin of the German churches. The principal churches of Germany, like thoſe of other nations, would fain carry up their foundation to the times of the apoſtles, and even to the apoſtles themſelves. Amongſt other things there is an old tradition, that three of St. Peter's companions, namely, Eucharius, Valerius, and Maternus, were ſent by him into Belgic Gaul, and ſo far ſeconded by divine favour that they ſucceeded in eſtabliſhing churches at Cologne, Treves, Tongres, Leige, and other places, and continued in the ſuperintendance and government of them until their

cius, an ancient king of that iſland, as having in this century procured ſome Chriſtian teachers to

CENT II.

Origin of the Gallic, Germany, and Engliſh churches.

their deaths. Vid. Chriſtoph. Brower. *Annales Trevirenſes*, lib. ii. p. 143, & ſeq. *Acta Sanctor. Antwerpienſ.* ad d. xxix. Januarii, p. 918. But in refutation of this, thoſe great and impartial writers, Calmet in his *Diſſertation ſur les Eveques de Treves*, tom. i. *Hiſtoire de Lorraine*, part iii. iv. Bolland in his *Acta Sanctorum*, Januarii, tom. ii. p. 922, & ſeq. Tillemont in his *Memoires pour ſervir a l'Hiſtoire de l'Egliſe*, tom. iv. p. 1082; and finally, Hontheim in his *Diſſertatio de Æra Epiſcopatus Trevirenſis*, tom. i. *Hiſt. Trevirenſ.* have fully ſhewn, by arguments as concluſive as the nature of the queſtion will admit of, that the above-mentioned ſacred characters, with their aſſociates, belong properly to the third, or rather to the beginning of the fourth century, and that the dignity of apoſtolic legates was gratuitouſly conferred upon them either through ignorance or vanity during the middle ages. To confeſs the truth, it appears to me extremely probable that the ſame perſons by whom a knowledge of Chriſt and his goſpel was in the ſecond century communicated to the Gauls, extended the ſcene of their labours ſo far as to make the inhabitants of that part of Germany which is contiguous to Gaul, partakers of the ſame bleſſing. Gabriel Liron has, with much labour and ingenuity, endeavoured to prove the apoſtolical antiquity of the German churches, in his *Singularitès Hiſtoriques & Litteraires*, tom. iv. p. 193, & ſeq. But the arguments and ſuggeſtions of this learned writer, although they may induce us to refuſe joining with thoſe who go the length of poſitively aſſerting, that no apoſtle or apoſtolic legate ever ſet foot in Germany, and that there were no Chriſtians in that country prior to the time of Pothinus and Irenæus, yet by no means render it clear that ſuch ſucceſs attended the labours of any apoſtolic miſſionaries in Germany as for them to collect together and eſtabliſh certain churches, the preſidency over which they retained during their lives, and on their deaths transferred over to others. If any of the firſt promulgators of Chriſtianity ever travelled into Germany, which in the abſence of all poſitive teſtimony on the ſubject I will take upon me neither to affirm nor deny; it is certain that they accompliſhed nothing of any great moment amongſt this warlike and uncultivated people, nor could any Chriſtian churches have been eſtabliſhed by them in that country upon any thing like a ſolid or permanent foundation.

CENT. II. be ſent him from Rome by the pontiff Eleutherus [*e*].

Origin of the Gallic, German, and Engliſh churches.

IV. It

[*e*] Previouſly to the reformation, Joſeph of Arimathea, the Jewiſh ſenator, by whom in conjunction with Nicodemus our bleſſed Saviour's obſequies were performed, was commonly conſidered as having been the parent of the Britiſh church. The tale propagated by the monks, in ſupport of which however they could advance no ſort of authority whatever, was that this illuſtrious character and twelve other perſons were diſpatched by St. Philip, who had taken upon himſelf the inſtruction of the Franks, into Britain, for the purpoſe of diffuſing a knowledge of Chriſtianity amongſt the inhabitants of that iſland alſo, and that their miſſion was not unattended with ſucceſs; for that within a ſhort period they were ſo fortunate as to make a great number of converts, and to lay the foundation of the church of Glaſtonbury. Vid. Rapin de Thoyras, *Hiſtoire d'Angleterre*, tom. i. p. 84. At preſent the better informed of the Britiſh do not heſitate to give up this narrative of the origin of their church as altogether a fiction; but they do not fail, at the ſame time, to ſupply its place by an account equally, nay even more auguſt and magnificent, leſt they ſhould appear to come behind the other European churches in point of antiquity and conſequence. What they aſſert is, that the Britons are expreſsly enumerated both by Euſebius and Theodoret amongſt thoſe of the Gentiles, whom theſe writers ſtate to have enjoyed the benefit of receiving the faith from the mouths of the apoſtles themſelves, and that therefore ſome one or other of the apoſtles muſt have travelled into Britain and reſided there for ſome time. But ſince it is not a little difficult to fix on either of the apoſtles that were the companions of our bleſſed Lord, who could with the leaſt ſhow of probability be named as the one that took this journey into Britain, they have recourſe to St. Paul, maintaining that the inhabitants of this iſland acquired their firſt knowledge of the goſpel through the preaching of this great apoſtle of the Gentiles, who had ſailed into Britain from Spain. And this conjecture or opinion they conceive to be ſupported by (amongſt other ancient authors) Clement of Rome, who ſays that St. Paul travelled, ἐπὶ τὸ τέρμα τῆς δύσεως, "to the very confines of the weſt." To this they add, that amongſt ſo many thouſands of the Romans as paſſed into Britain, both during the time of Claudius and afterwards, there muſt no doubt have been many who profeſſed the Chriſtian faith.

The

IV. It is ſcarcely, indeed we might ſay, it is not at all poſſible to aſcertain, with any thing like preciſion, CENT. II. Number of the Chriſtians in this age.

The church that was thus firſt eſtabliſhed in Britain, however, they allow to have been but ſmall, and after a little while to have wholly fallen to ruin, or at leaſt gone in great meaſure to decay. They therefore conſider the Britiſh church as having received, what may be termed, its principal and permanent foundation, in the ſecond century, under the reign of the emperor Marcus Antoninus, and in the time of the Roman pontiff Eleutherus. Their opinion as to this is grounded on what is recorded by Bede in his Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory and by others after him, as a fact not in the leaſt to be doubted of, namely, that certain perſons were, at that period, diſpatched to Rome by Lucius the king of Britain, requeſting that ſome Chriſtian teachers might be ſent him; that in conſequence of this application ſeveral ſuch teachers were ſent, and that by the zeal and unremitted exertions of theſe miſſionaries, the whole iſland was gradually converted to the Chriſtian faith. The reader will find theſe different points diſcuſſed with much ingenuity, and ſupported with great ability and learning, by thoſe eminent native writers: J. Uſher in his *Antiquitates Eccleſiæ Britannicæ*, cap. i. p. 7. F. Godwin in his work *de Converſione Britanniæ*, cap. i. p. 7. Edward Stillingfleet in his *Antiquities of the Britiſh Church*, cap. i. and William Burton in his *Animadverſ. in Epiſt. Clement. Rom. ad Corinthios. Patrum Apoſtolic.* tom. ii. p. 470.: With whom we find not a few foreigners agreeing in opinion. Vid. F. Spanheim, *Hiſt. Eccleſ. Maj.* ſæc. ii. p. 603, 604. tom. i. opp. Rapin de Thoyras, *Hiſtoire d'Angleterre*, tom. i. p. 86, & ſeq. With the reader's leave I will now give my own opinion on this ſubject, propounding in the way of conjecture ſuch ſuggeſtions as appear to me to have probability on their ſide, but adopting nothing which is not ſupported by the deciſive teſtimony either of facts or of words. In the firſt place then, as to the queſtion of, whether or not either of the apoſtles themſelves, or any one commiſſioned by them, ever took a journey into Britain with a view to the converſion of the natives; I believe it muſt be paſſed over as not to be determined, although I muſt confeſs, that probability ſeems to lean rather in favour of thoſe who take the affirmative ſide, than of thoſe who oppoſe it. St. Paul's voyage into Britain is moſt intimately connected with his journey into Spain; but with

CENT. II. preciſion, the proportion which the number of the Chriſtians in this age, and more eſpecially within

Number of the Chriſtians in this age.

what doubts and almoſt inſurmountable difficulties, the fact of this apoſtle ever having been in Spain is encumbered, is well known to every one at all converſant in theſe matters. The ſtory of Joſeph of Arimathea being ſent from Gaul into Britain by Philip, ſeems to have ſomewhat in it of truth, although corrupted and deformed through the ignorance, or arrogance, or, perhaps, the knavery of the monks. In fact, it ſhould ſeem more than probable as to this, that what took place in Gaul and Germany, happened likewiſe in Britain, namely, that certain devout characters, of an age by far more recent than that of the apoſtles, were, through one or other of the above-mentioned cauſes converted into apoſtolic miſſionaries. The truth of the matter I ſuſpect to be, that the monks had collected from remote tradition and ancient documents, that ſome man of the name of Joſeph had paſſed over from Gaul into Britain, and applied himſelf with ſucceſs to the propagation of the Goſpel there; and either from their ignorance of any other eminent chriſtian character of the name of Joſeph, beſides him of whom mention is made in the hiſtory of Chriſt, or from a determination to exalt the dignity of the Britiſh church even at the expence of truth, took upon them to aſſert, that this Joſeph was none other than that illuſtrious Jewiſh ſenator, by whom the body of our Lord was interred, and that he was ſent from Gaul into Britain by the apoſtle Philip. In like manner as the French converted Dionyſius, a biſhop of Paris, who flouriſhed in the third century, into Dionyſius the Areopagite, and the Germans metamorphoſed Maternus, Eucharius, and Valerius, who lived in the third and fourth centuries, into primitive teachers and diſciples of St. Peter, ſo I doubt not the Britiſh monks alſo, out of zeal for the honour of their church, were induced to lend a helping hand to ſome Joſeph, who had in the ſecond century croſſed over to their anceſtors from Gaul, and to lift him up one century higher. Being in the preſent day unfurniſhed with any poſitive evidence on the ſubject, we can only offer this in the way of ſurmiſe. A conſiderable degree of obſcurity hangs over the hiſtory of thoſe perſons, who, in the ſecond century accompanied Pothinus out of Aſia into Gaul; poſſibly amongſt thoſe devout characters there might be likewiſe a Philip, who perſuaded Joſeph to undertake the

within the confines of the Roman empire, bore to that of thoſe who ſtill perſiſted in adhering to

CENT. II.

Number of the Chriſtians in this age.

journey into Britain; and whom the ſame monks, by way of giving a due conſiſtency to the different parts of their tale, might raiſe to the dignity of an apoſtle. In the preſent day, as we before obſerved, theſe things can only be gueſſed at; but our ſurmiſes are not mere random ones. For not to reſt upon the circumſtances that the clergy of almoſt all the different nations of Europe have fallen into a ſimilar error, or been guilty of the ſame kind of deceit, and that it would therefore be very extraordinary if thoſe of Britain alone, ſhould not have blundered, or tranſgreſſed in this reſpect; the account of the matter, as it has reached us, carries with it ſome not very obſcure marks of truth. That theſe monks, for inſtance, ſhould not have pitched upon one of the apoſtles; but have contented themſelves with one of our Lord's friends; that of ſuch friends, Joſeph ſhould have been the one fixed on; that this their Joſeph ſhould not have travelled into Britain, by the expreſs command of Chriſt himſelf, or have been conveyed thither in ſome miraculous manner; but that on the contrary, they ſhould allow him to have croſſed over to them from Gaul, which is, in fact, admitting that Chriſtianity had obtained for itſelf a footing amongſt the Gauls, prior to its introduction into Britain; all theſe circumſtances, in my opinion, ſeem plainly to indicate that they come not properly within the claſs of thoſe who invent what is abſolutely falſe, but were men who perverted the authentic traditions of their anceſtors, ſo as to render them ſubſervient to certain purpoſes of their own. My opinion is much the ſame with regard to Lucius, whom the more reſpectable of the Britiſh writers ſtrenouſly maintain to have been, not the original founder, but as it were, the ſecond parent and amplifier of their church. That a Lucius of this deſcription did actually exiſt, I have not the leaſt doubt; but I do not believe him to have been either a Briton or a king of the Britons. The very name, which is Roman, ſpeaks him to have been ſome man of eminence amongſt the Romans, who were at that time maſters of the iſland. This man probably, being well-diſpoſed toward the Chriſtian religion, or having, perhaps, already fully embraced it himſelf, beheld with grief the ſuperſtition of the Britons, and with a view to its abolition called in ſome Chriſtian teachers from abroad. Theſe his laudable inten-

CENT. II. to the heathen ſuperſtitions. Moſt of thoſe, by whom the ſubject has been adverted to in modern times,

Number of the Chriſtians in this age.

tions, we may well ſuppoſe to have been ſeconded by Divine Providence. I cannot, however, perſuade myſelf to believe that he had reſort to Rome for thoſe teachers, and that they were ſent over to him by Eleutherus, although this is the account which Bede gives us of the matter. Lucius had no need to ſend to ſuch a diſtance for men qualified to inſtruct the Britons in the principles of Chriſtianity, ſince in the time of Eleutherus, there were reſident in the neighbouring country of Gaul, particularly at Lyons and Vienne, Chriſtians ſufficiently ſkilled to aſſume the office of teachers, and burning with an holy zeal to embark in the further propagation of their faith. That Lucius ſhould have ſent to Rome for teachers, was, I ſuſpect, altogether an invention of the monks of the ſeventh century, who perceiving that the Britons were but little diſpoſed to receive the laws and inſtitutions of the Roman ſee, uſed every endeavour to perſuade them that the Britiſh church owed its foundation to the Roman pontiffs, and that it was by the aſſiſtance of Eleutherus that Lucius, the firſt Chriſtian king of Britain, brought about the converſion of his people. The information, however, which we are in poſſeſſion of reſpecting thoſe of the ancient Britons, who had embraced Chriſtianity prior to the arrival of Auguſtin, who was ſent into Britain by Gregory the Great in the ſixth century, will not permit us to believe this. Had their anceſtors been inſtructed in the principles of Chriſtianity by teachers from Rome, moſt unqueſtionably they would have adopted the Roman mode of worſhip, and have entertained a veneration for the majeſty, or to ſpeak more properly, the authority of the biſhop of Rome. But from the teſtimony of Bede, and various ancient documents that are to be found in Wilkins's *Councils of Great Britain and Ireland*, tom. i. p. 36., it is plain that they knew of no ſuch character as the biſhop of Rome; and could not, without great difficulty, be brought to yield obedience to his mandates. In their time of celebrating Eaſter too, to paſs over others of their obſervances, it appears that they were guided, not by the Roman, but the Aſiatic rule; and what is particularly deſerving of notice, they, like the Aſiatics in the ſecond century maintained, that the rule to which they conformed was derived from St. John. See Bede's *Hiſtoria Eccleſ. Gentis Anglorum*. lib. iii.

times, have erred by running into one or other of the extremes. The number of the Chriſtians at

CENT. II.

Number of the Chriſtians in this age.

lib. iii. c. xxv. p. 173. edit. Chifletian. By no ſort of circumſtantial evidence whatever, could it, in my opinion, be more clearly proved than by the above, that it was not from any miſſionaries of Eleutherus, but from certain devout perſons, who had originally come from the eaſt, namely from Aſia, that the ancient Britons received their inſtructions in the Chriſtian diſcipline. Whoever will be at the pains to connect all theſe things together, and to conſider them with a due degree of attention, may, I rather think, not feel altogether indiſpoſed to adopt the opinion which I myſelf have been led to entertain reſpecting the origin of of the Britiſh church. It is this:—if any Chriſtian church was ever formed in Britain, either by one of the apoſtles themſelves, or any of their diſciples, which I certainly will not take upon me to deny, it could not have been a large one, and muſt have very ſoon gone to decay. Chriſtianity, however, again recovered for itſelf a footing in Britain, under the reign of the emperor Marcus Antoninus in the ſecond century, when Eleutherus was biſhop of Rome, and the Chriſtians of Lyons and Vienne in Gaul were ſuffering under a moſt dreadful perſecution from the ſlaves of idolatry. There happened at that time to be reſident in Britain, a certain wealthy and powerful Roman of the name of Lucius, who had been led to entertain a reſpect for Chriſtianity, and was deſirous of having its principles diſſeminated, both amongſt the native inhabitants of Britain and the Romans who were reſident there. Hearing that certain devout men, who had come from Aſia into Gaul, had met with conſiderable ſucceſs in the propagation of the Goſpel in this latter country, and ſupported with wonderful fortitude the varied train of evils to which they were expoſed; he, by his authority, procured ſome of them to come over into Britain, and make known the true way of ſalvation alſo there. In all probability the name of the leader, or principal one of the ſacred characters that thus paſſed over from Gaul into Britain was Joſeph, and that of his ſuperior, by whoſe command or inſtigation the journey was undertaken, Philip; and hence aroſe the tale of Joſeph of Arimathea been ſent from Gaul into Britain, by the apoſtle Philip. At the time when this happened Eleutherus was biſhop of Rome, and occaſion was hence taken

CENT. II.

Number of the Chriſtians in this age.

at this period is as unqueſtionably over-rated by thoſe, who, not making due allowance for the tumid eloquence of ſome of the ancient fathers, repreſent it, as having exceeded, or at leaſt equalled that of the heathen worſhippers [*f*], as it is under-rated by thoſe who contend that in this age, there were no where to be met with, no not even in the largeſt and moſt populous cities, any Chriſtian aſſemblies of importance, either in point of magnitude or

by the Romiſh monks, who found their intereſts not a little concerned in making the Britons regard the Romiſh church in the light of a ſpiritual mother, to pretend that the teachers above alluded to had been ſent over from Rome by the pontiff Eleutherus. Should any one however, feel inclined rather to believe that ſome of the teachers from Aſia to whom the Gauls ſtood ſo much indebted for inſtruction, were induced, either voluntarily, or from motives of perſonal ſafety during the perſecution that raged at Lyons to croſs over into Britain, and that their labours in this iſland were crowned with the converſion of a multitude of people, the firſt and principal of whom was an eminent perſon of the name of Lucius, I ſhall not object to his adopting this opinion in preference to the one above ſuggeſted.

[*f*] Tertullian is by many conſidered as ſpeaking literally no more than the truth, when he urges the Romans in the following words: *Heſterni ſumus, et veſtra omnia implevimus, urbes, inſulas, caſtella, municipia, conciliabula, caſtra ipſa, tribus, decurias, palatium, ſenatum, forum. Sola vobis relinquimus templa. Apologet.* cap. xxxvii. p. 311. edit. Havercamp. To me, however, it appears that the African orator, who ſeems to have been naturally inclined to exaggeration, in this inſtance, moſt evidently rhetoricates in a very high degree. Were the paſſage to be ſtript of its inſidious and fallacious colouring, I conceive it would be found to mean ſimply this:—the Chriſtians are very numerous throughout the whole of the Roman empire, indeed it is ſcarcely poſſible to name any department in which ſome of them are not to be found.

reſpecta-

reſpectability [g]. That both are equally in an error, is manifeſt from the perſecutions that were carried

Number of the Chriſtians in the age.

[g] The world has of late ſeen many writers of the moſt oppoſite characters and views aſſiduouſly co-operate in undervaluing and diminiſhing the churches of the ſecond century. Thoſe inveterate enemies of the Chriſtian religion, whom we ſtyle Deiſts, do this by way of meeting the argument which its defenders draw from the wonderful and inconceivably rapid propagation of the goſpel; an argument which, they conceive, muſt completely fall to the ground could the world be once brought to believe, that during the firſt two centuries, the converts to Chriſtianity were but few, and thoſe, chiefly, of a ſervile or low condition. The adverſaries of epiſcopacy, whom we commonly term Preſbyterians, take the ſame ſide, with equal zeal, under the hope of proving that the charge committed to a biſhop of the ſecond century muſt have been compriſed within a very narrow compaſs, and conſequently that the prelates of the preſent day, whoſe ſuperintendance, for the moſt part, extends over large tracts of country, are altogether a different order of men from the primitive biſhops. The paſtor of a congregation of about two hundred, or at the moſt of ſix hundred perſons of little or no account (and a biſhop of the ſecond century, according to them, was nothing more,) may rather be likened, ſay they, to a country pariſh prieſt than to a biſhop of modern days. The ſame thing is likewiſe eagerly contended for by ſuch of our own writers as have entered the liſts with the advocates for the church of Rome. The object which theſe propoſe to themſelves in ſo doing is to render it evident that the vaſt multitude of martyrs and confeſſors with which the Roman calendar is crowded, muſt be, for the moſt part, fictitious; and that the bones, which are daily brought to light from the Roman catacombs, are rather to be conſidered as the remains of ſlaves and people of the loweſt order, than as reliques of chriſtian martyrs. In this way do we frequently find perſons of the moſt oppoſite views concur in yielding to each other a mutual ſupport. Wiſe and honeſt men, who take care always to temper their zeal in the cauſe of religion by a proper reſpect for truth, will readily allow that we have ſufficient grounds to warrant us in making no very inconſiderable deduction from that immenſe hoſt of Chriſtians which many conceive to have exiſted in the ſecond century; but on the other

CENT. II.

carried on with ſuch fury againſt the Chriſtians in this century. Had their number been any thing

Number of the Chriſtians in this age.

hand, they find themſelves precluded by the moſt unexceptionable teſtimony of words as well as facts (and this too deduced, not from the writings of the Chriſtians themſelves, but of men who were hoſtile to the chriſtian name,) from joining in opinion with thoſe who maintain that in this age the chriſtian churches were but few and inconſiderable throughout the Roman empire. To ſay nothing of the evidence of facts, there is the notable teſtimony of an author of the greateſt weight, namely, Pliny the proprætor of Bithynia, who, in a report made by him to the emperor ſoon after the commencement of this century, ſtates the province over which he preſided to be ſo filled with Chriſtians, that the worſhip of the heathen deities had nearly fallen into diſuſe. *Epiſtol.* lib. x. ep. xcvii. p. 821. edit. Longol. *Multi*, ſays he, *omnis ætatis, omnis ordinis, utriuſque ſexus etiam, vocantur in periculum et vocabuntur.* In this paſſage I would particularly recommend the words *omnis ordinis* to the attention of thoſe who would willingly have us believe that the primitive churches were made up of rude and illiterate perſons, ſlaves, old women of the loweſt order, in fact of the very dregs of the people, and that amongſt the chriſtian converts there were none to be found of any account or dignity. Either their poſition muſt be wrong, or Pliny muſt have here ſtated an abſolute falſehood. *Neque civitates tantum*, he continues, *ſed vicos etiam atque agros ſuperſtitionis iſtius contagio pervagata eſt.*—The whole of the province therefore ſwarmed with Chriſtians, not merely a particular part of it. Laſtly, it is plainly to be perceived from his account, that the credit of the Heathen deities had at one time been in great jeopardy, and that the number of their worſhippers was exceeded by that of the Chriſtians. This is manifeſt from what he ſtates of the temples having been deſerted, the ſacred ſolemnities for a long time intermitted, and the ſacrifices offered to the gods reduced to a mere nothing. *Certe ſatis conſtat, prope jam deſolata templa cœpiſſe celebrari, et ſacra ſolemnia diu intermiſſa repeti, paſſimque venire victimos, quarum adhuc rariſſimus emptor inveniebatur.* We are reduced to the neceſſity then of either believing that the report made by this circumſpect and prudent writer to his imperial maſter was founded in fiction, or elſe, admitting that in the Pontic province, even ſo early as his time, the Heathen

thing equal to what many would have us believe, common prudence would have with-held the emperors,

CENT. II.

Number of the Chriſtians in this age.

Heathen worſhippers were far outnumbered by the Chriſtians; at leaſt, that the greateſt part of its inhabitants had manifeſted a diſpoſition to abandon the religion of their anceſtors. Thoſe who conceive that the Roman empire contained within it but few Chriſtians at this period, think to do away the force of this teſtimony by ſaying, that in this letter to Trajan, Pliny aſſumes more the character of an advocate than that of an hiſtorian, and that therefore what he ſays is not to be underſtood altogether in a literal ſenſe. Now to this I will in candour accede ſo far as to admit that Pliny was deſirous of inſpiring the emperor with ſentiments of lenity and pity towards a ſet of people whom he knew to be of an harmleſs character, and under the influence of no evil principle, and that with this view he was led in ſome meaſure to amplify the number of the Chriſtians; but hither ſurely cannot be referred what he ſays of the temples having been before nearly deſerted, the ſacred rites intermitted, and the ſacrifices neglected. For Trajan could have drawn no other concluſion from this than that Chriſtianity was on the decline. In every other reſpect too, we find the orator quite laid aſide, and things repreſented in plain and ſimple terms without the leaſt artificial colouring. The teſtimony of Pliny is confirmed by Lucian, to whom it is impoſſible to impute any thing like a ſimilarity of deſign. Lucian, in an account which he has tranſmitted to poſterity of the life and nefarious practices of Alexander, repreſents this infamous impoſtor as complaining Ἄθεων ἐμπεπλῆσθαι καὶ χριστιανῶν τὸν Πόντον, οἱ περὶ αὐτῆ τολμῶσι τὰ κάκιστα βλασφημεῖν: *plenam eſſe Pontum Atheis et Chriſtianis, qui audeant peſſima de ſe maledicta ſpargere.* In *Pſeudomant.* § 25. p. 232. tom. ii. opp. edit. Geſner. This Alexander appears to have dreaded the perſpicacity of the Chriſtians, by whom he was ſurrounded, in no leſs a degree than that of the Epicureans, a ſet of men by no means of an inſignificant or frivolous character, but on the contrary intelligent and ſhrewd. By a particular injunction therefore, he prohibited both the one and the other from being admitted to the ſecret myſterious rites which he inſtituted. Εἴ τις Ἄθεος, ἢ χριστιανὸς, ἢ Ἐπικούρειος, ἥκει κατάσκοπος τῶν ὀργίων, φευγέτω. l. c. § 38. p. 244. Theſe words the illuſtrious tranſlator of Lucian renders, *ſi quis Atheus, aut Chriſtianus, aut Epicureus venerit, orgiorum ſpeculator, fugito.*

To

CENT. II.

Number of the Chriſtians in this age.

perors, magiſtrates, and prieſts, from irritating them either by proſcriptions, or puniſhments, or rigorous ſeverities of any kind. But on the other hand, had they been merely a trifling ſet of obſcure ignoble perſons, they would, inſtead of being combated with ſo much eagerneſs and pertinacity, have been ſpurned at and treated with deriſion. Upon the whole, the concluſion

To me, however, it appears that we ſhould better meet the ſenſe of the original by rendering them *ſi quis Atheus, ſive Chriſtianus ſit, ſive Epicureus, venerit, fugito.* The title of Atheiſts being, as it ſtrikes me, here uſed by this impoſtor generically to denote thoſe to whom he afterwards ſpecifically takes exception under the two denominations of Chriſtians and Epicureans. That the Chriſtians as well as the Epicureans, were termed Atheiſts by their adverſaries is well known to every one. It redounds however, not a little to the credit of the Chriſtians of Pontus that we find Alexander thus claſſing them with the Epicureans, a ſet of men on whom it was not eaſy to impoſe either with reſpect to their eyes or their ears. In the preſent day we have many who would willingly perſuade us that the primitive Chriſtians were of ſuch an inſignificant and ſtupid a character as not to be capable of diſtinguiſhing miracles and prodigies from the tricks of impoſtors, or from ſome of the regular though rare operations of nature. To this Alexander, however, this cunning deceiver, who had found means to impoſe on ſo many who were deficient neither in perception nor underſtanding, they appeared to be perſons of a very different caſt; men, in fact, endowed with a conſiderable ſhare of caution and prudence, who were well capable of forming a proper eſtimate of miracles and prodigies, and whom all the craft and cunning of thoſe who made it their ſtudy by tricks and deception to impoſe on the vulgar, could not eaſily delude. The fear thus manifeſted by Alexander of the Chriſtians, muſt certainly be allowed to poſſeſs conſiderable weight in proving how very numerous they were in the provinces of the Roman empire; nor is it open to the ſame exceptions that are taken to the teſtimony of Pliny. Alexander cannot be charged with indulging in declamation by way of moving the paſſions; his complaint is dictated merely by a concern for himſelf and his credit with the world.

that

CENT. II.

that ſeems leaſt liable to exception is, that the number of the Chriſtians was in this age very conſiderable in ſuch of the provinces as had been early brought to a knowledge of the truth, and continued ſtill to cultivate and cherish it; but that nothing beyond a few ſmall and inconſiderable aſſemblies of them was to be found in thoſe diſtricts where the light of the goſpel had been but recently made known, or if communicated at an early period, had been ſuffered to languiſh and fall into neglect.

Number of the Chriſtians in this age.

V. The aſtoniſhing progreſs thus made by Chriſtianity, and the uninterrupted ſeries of victories which it obtained over the ancient ſuperſtitions, are attributed by the writers of thoſe days, not ſo much to the zeal and diligence of thoſe who, either in conformity to what they conſidered as a divine call, of their own accord aſſumed the office of teachers, or had elſe been regularly appointed thereto by the biſhops, as to the irreſiſtible operation of the Deity acting through them. For, according to theſe authors, ſo energetic and powerful was the operation of divine truth, that moſt frequently, upon its being ſimply propounded, without entering into either proofs or arguments, its effects on the hearers' minds were ſuch, that perſons of every age, ſex, and condition, became at once enamoured of its excellence, and eagerly ruſhed forward to embrace it. The aſtoniſhing fortitude and conſtancy likewiſe, they report, with which many of the Chriſtians ſuſtained themſelves, under torments of the moſt excruciating nature, even to the very death, inſpired great multitudes of thoſe who were ſpectators of their ſufferings with an invincible determination to enrol themſelves under the banners of a religion capable of inſpiring its followers with

Cauſes to which the rapid propagation of Chriſtianity is to be attributed.

ſuch

CENT. II.

Cauſes to which the rapid propagation of Chriſtianity is to be attributed.

ſuch magnanimity of ſoul and ſuch a thorough contempt for every thing temporal, whether it were good or evil [*b*]. Finally, they repreſent the Deity as having beſtowed on not a few of his miniſters and choſen ſervants, ſuch a meaſure of his all-powerful Spirit, that they could expel dæmons from the bodies of thoſe that were poſſeſſed, cure diſeaſes with a word, recal the dead to life, and do a variety of other things far beyond the reach of human power to accompliſh [*i*]. Moſt certain it is that the generality of

[*b*] Tertullian, at nearly the end of his Apology, obſerves, with much elegance and ingenuity, *Nec quicquam tamen proficit exquiſitior quæque crudelitas veſtra, illecebra eſt magis ſectæ. Plures efficimur, quoties metimur a vobis: Semen eſt ſanguis Chriſtianorum.* It is remarked alſo by Juſtin Martyr (in *Dialog. cum Tryphone*, p. 322. edit. Jebbian.) Ὅσῳπερ ἂν τοιαῦτα τίνα γένηται, τοσῷτο μᾶλλον ἄλλοι πλειόνες πιϛοὶ καὶ θεοσεβεῖς διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ Ἰησοῦ γίγνονται *Quanto magis ejuſmodi quædam in nos expediuntur tormenta, tanto alii plures fideles & veræ religionis cultores per nomen Jeſu fiunt.* This he illuſtrates by a ſimile by no means inelegant: Ὁποῖον ἐὰν ἀμπέλῳ τις ἐκτέμῃ τὰ καρποφορήσαντα μέρη, εἰς τὸ ἀναβλαϛῆσαι ἑτέρους κλάδους καὶ ἐυθαλεῖς καὶ καρποφόρους ἀναδίδωσι· τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον καὶ ἐφ' ἡμῶν γίνεται. *Quemadmodum enim ſi quis vitis excidat fructificantes partes ut palmites quidem alios floridos & frugiferos proferat, facit: Ita in nobis quoque accidit. Plantata namque a Deo et Chriſto ſervatore vitis eſt ejus populus.*

[*i*] That this was the caſe, and that thoſe gifts of the Holy Spirit which are commonly termed miraculous, were liberally imparted by Heaven to numbers of the Chriſtians, not only in this but likewiſe in the ſucceeding age, and more eſpecially to thoſe of them who devoted themſelves to the propagation of the goſpel amongſt the Heathen, has, on the faith of the concurrent teſtimony of the ancient fathers, been hitherto univerſally credited throughout the Chriſtian world. Nor does it appear to me, that in our belief as to this we can with the leaſt propriety be ſaid to have embraced any thing contrary to ſound reaſon. Only let it be conſidered that the writers on whoſe teſtimony we rely, were all of them men of gravity and worth, who could feel no inclination

of thoſe who in this century devoted themſelves to the propagation and defence of Chriſtianity, were

CENT. II.

Cauſes to which the rapid propagation of Chriſtianity is to be attributed

inclination to deceive, that they were in part philoſophers, that in point of reſidence and country they were far ſeparated from each other, that their report is not grounded upon mere hearſay, but upon what they ſtate themſelves to have witneſſed with their own eyes, that they call upon God himſelf in the moſt ſolemn manner to atteſt its truth, (Vid. Origen *contra Celſum*, lib. i. p. 35. edit. Spencer;) and laſtly, that they do not pretend to have themſelves poſſeſſed the power of working miracles, but merely attribute it to others; and let me aſk what reaſon can there poſſibly be aſſigned, that ſhould induce us to withhold from them our implicit credit? Some years ſince, however, the oppoſite ſide of the queſtion was boldly taken up by an Engliſh author, who on other occaſions had ſhewn himſelf to be poſſeſſed of an excellent genius and no ordinary degree of learning; I mean Dr. Conyers Middleton, who, in a volume of ſome ſize, which he ſent out under the title of "*A free Inquiry into the miraculous Powers*, &c." London, 1749, has, without ceremony, upbraided the whole Chriſtian world with ſuffering themſelves to be groſsly impoſed upon in this reſpect, and taken upon him to aſſert, that every thing which has been handed down to us by ſo many of the fathers reſpecting the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit and the miracles of the firſt ages, is devoid of foundation, and utterly unworthy of credit. Thoſe who may be deſirous of learning the hiſtory of this celebrated book, and of the very acrimonious controverſy to which it gave riſe in Great Britain, may conſult the Engliſh, French, and German literary journals, as alſo the confutation of the work itſelf, which was lately publiſhed in Germany. In this place I ſhall attempt nothing more than by a few obſervations to contribute ſomewhat towards the illuſtration of this matter, which has not even yet ceaſed to agitate the learned world, and muſt certainly be conſidered, on many accounts, as of the very higheſt moment. The ſtate of the caſe appears to be this. The very learned author of the Inquiry moſt fully admits that the apoſtolic age abounded in miracles and extraordinary gifts, but denies that any thing of this nature was witneſſed by the world ſubſequently to the deceaſe of our Lord's apoſtles, and hence infers, that the accounts which have reached us of the miracles wrought in the ſecond and third centuries, are to be regarded either as the inventions

of

CENT. II.

were not poſſeſſed either of ſufficient knowledge, eloquence, or authority, to be capable of effecting

Cauſes to which the rapid propagation of Chriſtianity is to be attributed.

of knaves, or the dreams of fools. It appears to him, moreover, that an urgent neceſſity exiſts for our coming to this concluſion, inaſmuch as the principles and arguments on which the miracles of the firſt ages reſt for ſupport, will ſerve equally well to uphold the credit of the wonders pretended to have been wrought in more recent times by the ſaints of the Romiſh church: and it is conſequently impoſſible for us effectually to aſſail the latter until we can ſo far break through our prejudices as to give up our defence of a belief in the former. Now in all this there may perhaps be nothing to which exception can juſtly be taken, or that ſhould ſeem to be unworthy of a man of ſound ſenſe and a Chriſtian.—For the divine origin of the Chriſtian religion depends not at all for ſupport on the miracles which are recorded to have been wrought in the ſecond and third centuries. Only let it be granted that a power of altering the laws of nature was reſident in Chriſt and his apoſtles, and the point is placed beyond the reach of cavil. But to any one who ſhall peruſe Dr. Middleton's book with attention, it cannot fail to be apparent that, although his attack is oſtenſibly directed ſolely againſt the miracles of more recent times, yet his object was collaterally to impeach the credit of thoſe wrought by our Lord and his apoſtles, and inſidiouſly to undermine our belief of every thing to the accompliſhment of which the ordinary powers of nature could not have been equal. For the arguments and mode of reaſoning which he oppoſes to the miracles of the ſecond and third centuries, are of ſuch a nature as to admit of their being moſt readily brought to bear with equal effect on thoſe of the firſt century, ſo that if the former fall before them, every hope muſt vaniſh of our being any longer able to ſupport the latter. Upon perceiving, as they readily did, that ſuch was the ſcheme of this ingenious but artful writer, it could not otherwiſe happen but that the very learned and venerable body whoſe province it is to watch over the intereſts of religion in England, ſhould at once take the alarm, and not only make uſe of every effort to render the plan abortive, but alſo without reſerve accuſe its author of bad faith, and attribute to him the worſt intentions. The certainty and truth of what I have here ſtated is ſufficiently proved by the learned Doctor's very mode of argumentation, which is of ſuch a nature that if it were to prevail would greatly endanger the authority

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ing any thing great or remarkable without preternatural aſſiſtance. For although as the age ad-

CENT. II.

Cauſes to which the rapid propagation of Chriſtianity is to be attributed.

of thoſe miracles on which the truth of the Chriſtian religion principally reſts for ſupport. The ſcheme which the Doctor labours by great length of argument and an abundant diſplay of erudition to eſtabliſh is briefly this.—All the Chriſtian writers of the firſt three centuries whoſe works have come down to us, were men poſſeſſed of no judgment or diſcrimination, neither were they always ſufficiently cautious and circumſpect, but occaſionally betrayed a very great proneneſs to ſuperſtition and credulity. Whatever therefore they may have tranſmitted to us reſpecting the miracles wrought in their days, including even thoſe of which they ſtate themſelves to have been eye-witneſſes, is to be conſidered in the light of mere nonſenſe and fable. As if it were certain that none but men of nice diſcrimination were capable of diſtinguiſhing between a true miracle and a pretended one, and that thoſe muſt of neceſſity have always been impoſed upon who on ſome occaſions appear to have yielded their credit on too eaſy terms. We could have endured it had this eminent ſcholar contented himſelf with aſſerting that ſeveral of thoſe things which are reported to have happened in the firſt ages, contrary to the eſtabliſhed order of nature, might very well be doubted of; but to attempt, by a general argument like the above, open as it is to infinite exceptions, and totally deſtitute of any evident or neceſſary connection, to overthrow the united teſtimonies of ſo many authors of unqueſtionable piety, and who, it is plain, were in many things ſufficiently cautious and circumſpect, indicates, in my opinion, a mind replete with temerity, and diſpoſed to ſtrew the paths of religion with inſidious difficulties and ſnares. Happily this illuſtrious writer himſelf appears ſome ſhort time before his death, which happened in the year 1750, to have been fully convinced, by the arguments of his opponents, of the weakneſs of his opinion. For in his laſt reply, a poſthumous work that came out in 1751, under the title of a "Vindication of the free Inquiry into the miraculous Powers which are ſuppoſed to have ſubſiſted in the Chriſtian Church," &c. I ſay in this his laſt literary effort, although he expreſſes himſelf in language more contentious and virulent than the occaſion could poſſibly demand, he yet plainly acknowledges himſelf to be vanquiſhed, and yields up the palm to his adverſaries. For he therein diſclaims ever having meant to contend that no miracles

CENT. II.

Cauſes to which the rapid propagation of Chriſtianity is to be attributed.

advanced, the ſtudy of philoſophy and letters gained ground amongſt the Chriſtians in general, and more particularly in Egypt, and the truths of the Goſpel were embraced by ſome even of thoſe who were diſtinguiſhed by the title of philoſophers, yet there was every where a conſiderable ſcarcity of learned and eloquent men; and by far the greater part of the biſhops and elders of the churches, took to themſelves credit rather than ſhame, for their utter ignorance of all human arts and diſcipline.

miracles whatever were wrought in the primitive Chriſtian church ſubſequently to the death of the apoſtles, and profeſſes himſelf ready to admit, that when occaſion required, God was ever ready to ſupport the Chriſtian cauſe by marks of his omnipotent power. All that he ever intended to maintain, he ſays, was this, that a conſtant and perpetual power of working miracles was never reſident in the church poſterior to the age of the apoſtles, and that therefore no credit could be due to thoſe of the early defenders of Chriſtianity who had arrogated to themſelves ſuch a perpetual power: in ſhort, if I rightly comprehend the meaning of the learned author, he wiſhed to explain himſelf as having never intended to aſſert any thing more than that amongſt the teachers of the ſecond and third centuries there were none that poſſeſſed the power of working miracles at pleaſure. But this is altogether changing the ſtate, as they term it, of the controverſy. Had the learned Doctor, when he entered on his undertaking, had nothing more in view than the eſtabliſhment of this point, he might have ſpared himſelf all the pains that he took, in the firſt place, to write, and afterwards to defend his book. For I do not know that it ever entered into the mind of any one profeſſing Chriſtianity, to aſſert, that in the ſecond, third, or fourth centuries there were to be found amongſt the Chriſtians men to whom the Almighty had conceded the power of working miracles at all times and in all places, and of ſuch a nature and as often as they might think proper. *Bella geri placuit nullos habitura triumphos.*

VI. But

VI. But we ſhould do wrong to underſtand what is thus recorded reſpecting the wonderful means by which the Deity himſelf contributed towards the propagation of the Goſpel, in ſuch a way as to conceive that the cauſe of Chriſtianity was not at all indebted for its ſucceſs to human counſels, labour, or ſtudies. For without doubt the progreſs of divine truth was, in no little degree, forwarded by the very wiſe and laudable exertions of the biſhops and other pious characters in getting the writings of the apoſtles, which had been collected into one volume, tranſlated into the moſt popular languages, and diſtributed amongſt the multitude: indeed, the bare reading of theſe works is ſtated to have ſo affected many, as to cauſe them inſtantly to embrace the Chriſtian faith [*k*]. The cauſe of Chriſtianity derived alſo

CENT. II.

Human cauſes which contributed to forward the propagation of Chriſtianity.

[*k*] Whether any one or more of the ancient tranſlations of the ſacred volume that have reached our days, can juſtly be ranked amongſt the literary productions of this early period, admits of conſiderable doubt. It appears, however, from very reſpectable authorities, that in the ſecond century for certain, if not in the firſt, the books of the New Teſtament had been tranſlated into different popular languages. See Baſnage *Hiſtoire de l'Egliſe*, liv. ix. cap. i. p. 450. tom. i. How anxiouſly deſirous, moreover, the Chriſtians of this age were to inform the minds of the multitude, and to lead them to Chriſt, by furniſhing them with tranſlations of thoſe writings in which the ſcheme of ſalvation through Him is laid open, and with what induſtry this object was purſued by men of every deſcription, cannot be better underſtood than from the great number of Latin tranſlators of the ſacred volume, which, according to Auguſtine, ſtepped forward even in the very infancy as it were of Chriſtianity. For as the Latin language had been rendered familiar to a great part of the world, and was not entirely unknown even to what were termed the barbarous nations, the Chriſtians conceived that by their tranſlating the books of the New Teſtament into this tongue, the way of truth would at once be laid open to an innumerable portion of mankind.

CENT. II.

alſo no inconſiderable benefit from the different Apologies, in Greek as well as Latin, by which thoſe

Human cauſes which contributed to forward the propagation of Chriſtianity.

Eager therefore to accompliſh ſo deſirable an end, they were in ſome inſtances led to form too favourable an eſtimate of their powers, and the taſk was occaſionally undertaken by thoſe who were by no means competent to its execution.—*Qui ſcripturas ex Hebræa lingua in Græcam verterunt*, ſays Auguſtine (*de Doctrin. Chriſtian.* lib. ii. cap. xi. p. 19. tom. iii.) *numerari poſſunt, Latini autem interpretes nullo modo. Ut enim cuique primis fidei temporibus in manus venit codex Græcus & aliquantulum facultatis ſibi utriuſque linguæ habere videbatur, auſus eſt interpretari.* In this paſſage it is manifeſt, although there are ſome who either cannot or will not perceive it, that by *Codex Græcus* is not meant any kind of book written in the Greek language, but the *Codex Bibliorum*, or thoſe writings which the Chriſtians held ſacred. For Auguſtine is not ſpeaking of tranſlations from the Greek in general, but of verſions of the Holy Scriptures. Without doubt the account he here gives is to be conſidered as ſomewhat hyperbolical: for who can bring himſelf readily to believe that in the infancy of Chriſtianity the multitude of Latin tranſlators of the ſacred volume was ſo great as not to admit of being numbered? I conceive him therefore to have meant merely that a conſiderable number of the early Chriſtians had taken upon them the office of tranſlating the Holy Scriptures into the Latin tongue, which was at that time one of the moſt popular languages. A ſufficient teſtimony ſurely even this of their piety and holy zeal. Of theſe various Latin tranſlations Auguſtine pronounces a decided preference to be due to one which he names *the Italic*. *In ipſis autem interpretationibus, Itala ceteris præferatur; nam eſt verborum tenacior, cum perſpicuitate ſententiæ.* l. c. cap. xv. p. 21. Certainly it is no ſmall credit to a tranſlator to confine himſelf cloſely to the words, and yet at the ſame time to convey with perſpicuity the ſenſe of his original. But reſpecting this verſion which Auguſtine names *the Italic*, a good deal of diſcuſſion has taken place amongſt the learned converſant in biblical literature, and particularly in the Romiſh church. For they entertain no doubt, but that the verſion to which Auguſtine alludes, was the ſame with that which was univerſally received by the Latin church prior to its adoption of the more recent tranſlation from the Hebrew by Jerome. Wherefore they ſuppoſe it to have been made in the time

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thoſe learned and eloquent writers Juſtin Martyr, Athenagoras, Quadratus, Ariſtides, Miltiades, Tertullian, CENT. II.

Human cauſes which contributed to forward the propagation of Chriſtianity.

of the apoſtles, indeed poſſibly by one even of the apoſtles themſelves, and having been approved of by Chriſt's vicar and the ſucceſſor of St. Peter, they deem it to be, in point of dignity and credit, if not ſuperior, at leaſt on an equal footing with the Greek text that we have of the two Teſtaments. To this perſuaſion is to be attributed the very great and very learned induſtry which ſome of the firſt ſcholars both in France and Italy have before now diſplayed, and ſtill continue to diſplay, in endeavours to bring to light and reſtore the reliques of this venerable verſion; and indeed, if by any poſſibility it could be done, to recover the whole of it. For could this treaſure be come at, they expect that many corruptions and other blemiſhes with which they will have it that the Greek and Hebrew copies of the Scriptures are at preſent deformed, would be happily detected and removed, and the true reading of a variety of controverted paſſages be eſtabliſhed beyond diſpute. The very learned Benedictine brethren of the convent of St. Maure, whoſe erudition reflects ſo much honour on France, have long been diſtinguiſhed for their exertions in this way. One of them, John Martianay, who had before acquired no ſmall reputation by an edition of Jerome's works and other literary undertakings, ſent out at Paris in 1695, in octavo, what he conſidered as the genuine old Italic verſion of the Goſpel of St. Matthew and the Epiſtle of St. James. A very laborious work in three large volumes folio was next publiſhed by Pet. Sabatier at Rheims, in 1743, under the title of *Bibliorum ſacrorum Latinæ verſiones antiquæ, ſeu vetus Italica & ceteræ, quotquot in codicibus MSS. et antiquorum libris reperiri potuerunt, quæ cum vulgata Latina & cum textu Greco comparentur.*—The moſt recent of thoſe who have laboured in this field is Joſ. Blanchini, preſbyter of the Oratorian Convent of St. Philip, whoſe *Evangeliarium quadruplex Latinæ verſionis antiquæ, ſeu veteris Italicæ, ex codicibus manuſcriptis aureis, argenteis, purpureis, aliiſque pluſquam millenariæ antiquitatis*, came out in the year 1749, at Rome, in four ſplendid folio volumes of the largeſt ſize. It cannot be neceſſary that I ſhould direct the reader's attention to any minor, or leſs diſtinguiſhed writers, who may have either treated expreſsly of this ſubject, or caſually touched on any particular part of it. Great however as have been the pains and erudition beſtowed on this matter,

CENT. II. Tertullian, Tatian, and others, throughout the whole of this century, repelled the ſlanders and

Human cauſes which contributed to forward the propagation of Chriſtianity.

they muſt, unleſs I am altogether deceived, be conſidered as having proved entirely fruitleſs and unavailing as to the object to which they were particularly directed; although, in a general point of view, the labour that has been uſed in inveſtigating the Latin copies of the Scriptures may not have been entirely unproductive of advantage. In the firſt place it is aſſumed as a fact, by thoſe illuſtrious ſcholars who are at preſent engaged in endeavours to recover the ancient Italic verſion, that before the time of Jerome, the whole of the church, to which the Latin language was common, made uſe of one and the ſame tranſlation of the Scriptures; which having been adopted firſt at Rome, and been approved of by the biſhop of that city, had been communicated from thence to all the Latin churches, and under the ſanction of the biſhop of Rome been univerſally introduced into the public worſhip. I ſay this is aſſumed by theſe eminent writers, but I have not yet obſerved that any thing like a proof of it has ever been adduced by any one. On the contrary, I conceive it can be ſhewn by the moſt irrefragable arguments, deduced not only from the writings that are extant of the ancient Fathers of the Latin church, not only from Jerome, who in the preface to his Latin verſion of the Four Evangeliſts ſays expreſsly, that the Latin tranſlations of the ſacred volume differed wonderfully from each other, and that there were *tot fere exemplaria quot codices*, not only from the moſt unexceptionable teſtimony, that the church of Milan and other churches within the confines of Italy itſelf made uſe of verſions of their own which were different from the reſt, but alſo from thoſe very learned writers themſelves, who have devoted ſo much time and attention to the recovery of the ancient Italic verſion, that the Latin churches did not all of them, either before the time of Jerome or after, make uſe of one and the ſame tranſlation of the Scriptures, but that the verſions in uſe amongſt them were various and diſſimilar. For not to enter into an examination of any others, the verſions publiſhed by Blanchini differ ſo very widely from each other in a great many places, that it would be an utter violation of every ſort of probability whatever, to conſider them as the work of one and the ſame tranſlator. In vain does Blanchini contend that this want of harmony in his copies is to be attributed to the careleſsneſs of tranſcribers; for the

and reproaches of its froward and impetuous adver- CENT. II.

points in which they differ are, for the moſt part, of that nature and importance, that no want of care on the part of the tranſcribers will account for their diſagreement, but it muſt be attributed to a diverſity in the originals from whence they copied. In the next place, theſe ſame learned characters aſſume, that this Italic verſion, which they conſider as having been common to all the Latin churches, was a work of the firſt century, and that it was undertaken and perfected either by one of the apoſtles themſelves, or at leaſt by ſome companion and diſciple of the apoſtles. But it is to be obſerved in the firſt place, that this is a perfectly gratuitous aſſumption; for what evidence have they to adduce that will give any thing even like a colour to it? And ſecondly, what appears entirely to have eſcaped their recollection, it was not until after the cloſe of the firſt century that the books of the New Teſtament were collected into one volume; and conſequently it is impoſſible that any tranſlation of theſe at leaſt could have been previouſly undertaken. But what nearly ſurpaſſes all belief, and moſt clearly evinces on what a ſlippery and weak foundation the opinions of ſome of the moſt learned men are not unfrequently built, even when they may ſeem to be placed beyond the reach of controverſy; I ſay, what is ſo aſtoniſhing as to be almoſt incredible is, that theſe illuſtrious ſcholars ſhould with the utmoſt confidence maintain, that that particular tranſlation which Auguſtine terms the Italic, and to which he aſſigns the preference over every other Latin one, was that very identical verſion of the ſacred code which they pretend to have been compoſed in the firſt century, during the life-time of the apoſtles, and to have been received and made uſe of by all the Latin churches after the example of that of Rome. From whence, I pray, do theſe learned characters derive their information as to this? Do they rely entirely on that paſſage of Auguſtine which we have cited above? For moſt certainly neither in Auguſtine, nor in any other ancient writer, is there to be found any paſſage beſides this, in which mention is made of the Italic verſion. But ſurely in theſe words of Auguſtine there is nothing which can afford, even to the moſt penetrating and ſagacious mind, grounds for any thing like a concluſion of this ſort. From whence therefore have they their information as to this? From what prime ſource has

Human cauſes which contributed to forward the propagation of Chriſtianity.

CENT. II.

adverſaries, and demonſtrated the extreme turpi-

Human cauſes which contributed to forward the propagation of Chriſtianity.

all that intelligence been drawn reſpecting the antiquity, the excellence, the dignity, the authority of a certain I know-not-what Italic tranſlation, which ſuch a number of learned men, not only of the Romiſh communion, but alſo of other denominations of Chriſtians, are ſo ready at communicating to us? From the words of Auguſtine, try what we may, it is impoſſible to collect any thing more than this: (I.) That the people of Africa, amongſt whom he reſided when he wrote, in addition to other Latin tranſlations of the ſacred volume, were poſſeſſed of one, which by way of diſtinguiſhing it from the reſt, they termed *the Italic*. From whence however it acquired this appellation is not to be aſcertained either from Auguſtine or elſewhere. Poſſibly it might have been thus named from its having been brought from Italy into Africa; poſſibly from its having been the one made uſe of in certain of the Italian churches; with equal probability may we conjecture that it took this denomination from the country of the perſon by whom it was made, or from the ſtructure perhaps and poliſh of its ſtyle. Every ſuppoſition that we may make as to this, muſt of neceſſity be obſcure and uncertain. There can be no doubt however but that thoſe who imagine that it was termed the Italic from the circumſtance of its having been in common uſe throughout all the churches of Italy, conjecture ill; for it is known for certain, that the churches of Ravenna and Milan, and others of the more celebrated churches of Italy had, each of them, a peculiar and proper verſion of its own. (II.) From Auguſtine's manner of expreſſing himſelf, it is to be inferred that the tranſlation which he terms the Italic was, in all probability, a different one from that which was uſed by the Roman church in the public ſervice. For as the Roman was the principal church of the Weſt, had this been the tranſlation that was publicly made uſe of in it, Auguſtine would, without doubt, from motives of reſpect, have termed it (*Romana*) the Roman one. Auguſtine always entertained the greateſt reverence for the Roman church, in which he conſidered *Apoſtolicæ Cathedræ principatum viguiſſe*, epiſt. xciii. tom. ii. opp. p. 69. (III.) It appears from the paſſage under conſideration, that what is there termed by way of diſtinction the Italic verſion, was not the one made uſe of publicly in the African churches; for Auguſtine paſſes an encomium on it, and wiſhes that a

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turpitude and folly of the popular ſuperſtitions. CENT. II.

Human cauſes which contributed to forward the propagation of Chriſtianity.

preference ſhould be given to it over every other verſion. A ſort of recommendation for which there could certainly have been no room, had this verſion been already adopted in the public worſhip. Indeed the very epithet *Italic*, which he applies to it, is an argument that it had not been ſo adopted: for had this tranſlation been the one commonly uſed in the African churches, inſtead of giving it the title of *Itala*, propriety would have required him rather to term it either *noſtra*, or *vulgaris*, or *publica*. *Italic* applied to any thing out of Italy, neceſſarily implies it to be foreign. (IV.) It is clear that in the opinion of Auguſtine, which might be either right or wrong, (for he was certainly not poſſeſſed of ſufficient ſkill in the learned languages to determine on the merits of a tranſlation of the Scriptures), this ſame verſion, whatever it may have been, was preferable to every other tranſlation. Now, in all this, there is certainly nothing which affords the leaſt ſupport to what we have been ſo much accuſtomed to have told us reſpecting an ancient verſion, termed the Italic, which was common to all the Latin churches: on the contrary, it is eaſy to perceive therein certain things which altogether ſet aſide and confute what we find contended for in ſo many books on the ſubject. Since then not a ſingle paſſage, except this ſolitary one of Auguſtine, is to be met with in any ancient author from whence the leaſt information can be gained on the ſubject, it appears to me that the labour of thoſe who ſo zealouſly devote themſelves to the recovery of this ancient Italic verſion, muſt ever of neceſſity prove fruitleſs, and that the undertaking in which they thus engage bears a very near reſemblance to that of the man who endeavoured to make a collection of the verſes that had been ſung by the Muſes upon Helicon. What we have above remarked, was in part noticed by that ingenious and penetrating ſcholar Richard Bentley, who hath borne away the palm of criticiſm from all his contemporaries in Great Britain; and he was, in conſequence, led to ſuſpect that the paſſage in Auguſtine, on which alone the exiſtence of the ancient Italic verſion depends for ſupport, had been corrupted. The way in which he propoſed to correct it was, by ſubſtituting the word *illa* for *Itala*, and the pronoun *quæ*, in place of the particle *nam*. To the propriety of this emendation David Caſley, to whom it had been communicated by

CENT. II.

tions [*l*]. It would be an act of injuſtice moreover, were we to omit mentioning, with due praiſe,

Human cauſes which contributed to forward the propagation of Chriſtianity.

Bentley, expreſſes his unqualified approbation in his *Catalogue of the Manuſcripts in the King's library*, London, 1734, fol. except that after the word *illa*, he would add, *Latina*. The Italic verſion, he, like Bentley, conſigns to its proper place amongſt the dreams of the learned. According to theſe then the paſſage in queſtion ought to run thus: *in ipſis interpretationibus illa* (or *illa Latina*) *præferatur quæ eſt verborum tenacior*. But I muſt own that this alteration appears to me to have ſomething too arbitrary and violent in it, unſupported, as it is, by the reading of any known copy of Auguſtine in exiſtence. Beſides it is not called for by any neceſſity. For even granting that the paſſage as it ſtands in our copies, is correct, which, I have no doubt it is, and granting alſo that, in the time of Auguſtine the Chriſtians of Africa, in addition to other Latin tranſlations of the holy Scriptures were poſſeſſed of one which they diſtinguiſhed by the title of the Italian, or Italic verſon, every thing that is commonly contended for reſpecting this tranſlation will ſtill remain deſtitute of all ſupport, and the labour that is conſumed in endeavours to recover it may conſequently be conſidered as entirely thrown away.

[*l*] It is by no means uncommon to hear the different writers of the ancient Apologies for the Chriſtians charged uniformly with this fault, that they have expoſed indeed in an admirable manner the folly of the various religions at that time prevalent in the world, and rendered ſtrikingly manifeſt the falſity of thoſe calumnies with which the Chriſtians were oppreſſed, but have beſtowed little or no pains in demonſtrating the truth and divinity of the Chriſtian religion. To the generality of people it appears that more attention ſhould have been paid to the latter object than to the former, inaſmuch as it required merely a demonſtration of the divine origin of Chriſtianity to overwhelm all other religions, and ſink them into contempt. But it would not be very difficult to adduce many things in reply to this accuſation. For the preſent we ſhall content ourſelves with obſerving, that the authors of the early Apologies for Chriſtianity, did not aſſume to themſelves the office of teachers or maſters, but came forward merely in the character of defenders. Now all that can be required

praiſe, the exertions of certain philoſophers and men of erudition, who had embraced Chriſtianity in various provinces of the Roman empire, and who, from their great authority with the people, and the facility of intercourſe which they enjoyed with the more cunning and wily enemies of religion, became highly inſtrumental in cauſing many to turn from the paths of error into the way of truth. CENT. II.

VII. With the greateſt grief, however, we find ourſelves compelled to acknowledge, that the upright and laudable exertions thus made by the wiſe and pious part of the Chriſtian community, were not the only human means, which in this century, were employed in promoting the propagation of the Chriſtian faith. For by ſome of the weaker brethren, in their anxiety to aſſiſt God with all their might, ſuch diſhoneſt artifices were occaſionally reſorted to, as could not, under any circumſtances, admit of excuſe, and were utterly unworthy of that ſacred cauſe, which they were unqueſtionably intended to ſupport. Perceiving, for inſtance, in what vaſt repute the poetical effuſions of thoſe ancient

Diſingenuous artifices occaſionally reſorted to in the propagation of Chriſtianity.

required of a defender to the full diſcharge of his duty is, to repel the calumnies wherewith the perſon accuſed is charged, and to ſhew that he had juſt cauſe for acting in the way he did. From the nature of their undertaking therefore it could only be expected of the early apologiſts for Chriſtianity, that they ſhould exonerate thoſe who had embraced it from the reproaches caſt upon them by their adverſaries, and by pointing out the abſurdity of the religions publicly countenanced, make it appear that there was the greateſt cauſe for their deſerting them. The buſineſs of demonſtrating the truth of that new religion, which they had adopted upon their repudiation of Paganiſm, was, without impropriety, left by them to its maſters and teachers.

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CENT. II.

Diſingenuous artifices occaſionally reſorted to in the propagation of Chriſtianity.

propheteſſes, termed Sybils, were held by the Greeks and Romans, ſome Chriſtian, or rather, perhaps, an aſſociation of Chriſtians, in the reign of Antoninus Pius, compoſed eight books of *Sybilline Verſes*, made up of propheſies reſpecting Chriſt and his kingdom, with a view to perſuade the ignorant and unſuſpecting, that even ſo far back as the time of Noah, a Sybil had foretold the coming of Chriſt, and the riſe and progreſs of his church [*m*]. This artifice

[*m*] The Sybilline verſes are treated of very much at large, by Jo. Albert. Fabricius in the firſt vol. of his *Bibliotheca Greca*, where the reader will alſo find a particular account given of thoſe writings, which were ſent out into the world under the forged name of Hermes Triſmegiſtus. The laſt editor of the Sybilline Oracles, was Servatius Gallæus, under whoſe ſuperintendance and care they were reprinted at Amſterdam 1689, in 4to., corrected from ancient manuſcripts, and illuſtrated with the comments of various authors. To this edition the reader will find added the Magian oracles, attributed to Zoroaſter and others, collected together by Jo. Opſopæus, amongſt which are not a few things of like Chriſtian origin. That the Sybilline verſes were forged by ſome Chriſtian, with a view of prevailing the more eaſily on the heathen worſhippers to believe in the truth of the Chriſtian religion, has been proved to demonſtration, by (amongſt others) David Blondell, in a French work, publiſhed at Charenton 1649, in 4to., under the following title, *Des Sybilles celebrés tant par l'Antiquité payenne, que par les ſaincts Peres.* Indeed we may venture to ſay, that with the exception of a few, who are blinded by a love of antiquity, or whoſe mental falculties are debilitated by ſuperſtition, there is not a ſingle man of erudition, in the preſent day, who entertains a different opinion. It may be obſerved, by the way, that Blondell's book was, after two years, republiſhed, under a different title, namely, *Traité de la Creance des Peres touchant l'Etat des Ames apres cette vie, et de l'Origine de la Priere pour les Morts, et du Purgatoire, a l'Occaſion de l'Ecrit attribué aux Sybilles.* Charenton 1651, 4to. The fact, no doubt was, that finding purchaſers were not

artifice succeeded with not a few, nay ſome even of the principal Chriſtian teachers themſelves were impoſed upon by it; but it eventually brought great ſcandal on the Chriſtian cauſe, ſince the fraud was too palpable to eſcape the ſearching penetration of thoſe who gloried in diſplaying their hoſtility to the Chriſtian name [*n*]. By others, who were aware that nothing could be held more ſacred than the name and authority of Hermes Triſmegiſtus were by the Egyptians, a work bearing the title of Poemander, and other books, replete with Chriſtian principles and maxims, were sent forth into the world, with the name of this moſt ancient and highly venerated philoſopher prefixed to them, ſo that deceit might, if poſſible, effect the converſion of thoſe whom reaſon had failed to convince [*o*]. Many other deceptions of this ſort,

CENT. II.

Diſingenuous artifices occaſionally reſorted to in the propagation of Chriſtianity.

not to be attracted by the former title, the bookſeller deemed it expedient to have recourſe to another.

[*n*] From what is ſaid by Origen, *contra Celſum*, lib. v. p. 272. edit. Spencer. as well as by Lactantius, *Inſtitut. Divinar.* lib. iv. cap. xv. and by Conſtantine the Great, in c. 19. of his *Oratio ad Sanctos*, which is annexed to Euſebius, it appears that the enemies of the Chriſtians were accuſtomed indignantly to upbraid them with this fraud.

[*o*] That the writings at preſent extant under the name of Hermes, muſt have been the work of ſome Chriſtian author, was firſt pointed out by Iſaac Caſaubon in his *Exerc.* I. *in Baronium*, § xviii. p. 54. This has ſince been confirmed by various writers, Vid. Herm. Conringius, *de Hermetica Ægyptiorum Medicina*, cap. iv. p. 46. Beauſobre, *Hiſtoire de Manichée*, tom. ii. p. 201. Cudworth, *Intellect. Syſtem*, tom. i. p. 373, 374. edit. Moſheim. Warburton, *Divine Legation of Moſes*, vol. i. p. 442. It may be obſerved, however, that certain of the learned diſſent, in ſome degree, from this opinion, conceiving that the writings of Hermes originated with the Platoniſts: they ſuſpect them however

CENT. II.

Diſingenuous artifices occaſionally reſorted to in the propagation of Chriſtianity.

ſort, to which cuſtom has very improperly given the denomination of PIOUS frauds, are known to have been practiſed in this and the ſucceeding century. The authors of them were, in all probability, actuated by no ill intention, but this is all that can be ſaid in their favour, for their conduct in this reſpect was certainly moſt ill adviſed and unwarrantable. Although the greater part of thoſe who were concerned in theſe forgeries on the public, undoubtedly belonged to ſome heretical ſect or other, and particularly to that claſs which arrogated to itſelf the pompous denomination of Gnoſtics [*p*], I yet cannot take upon me to acquit even the moſt ſtrictly orthodox from all participation in this ſpecies of criminality: for it appears from evidence ſuperior to all exception, that a pernicious maxim, which was current in the ſchools not only of the Egyptians, the Platoniſts, and the Pythagoreans, but alſo of the Jews, was very early recognized by the Chriſtians, and ſoon

however to have been interpolated and corrupted by the Chriſtians.

[*p*] Blondell in lib. ii. *de Sybillis*, cap. vii. p. 161. from the praiſes that are continually laviſhed in the Sybilline verſes on the country of Phrygia is led to conclude that the author of them was by birth a Phrygian; and ſince Montanus, a Chriſtian heretic of the ſecond century is known to have been a native of that region, ſuſpects that the compoſition of them might be a work of his. The Abbé de Longerue expreſſes his approbation of this conjecture in his Diſſertation *de Tempore quo nata eſt Hæreſis Montani*, which is to be found in Winckler's *Sylloge Anecdotorum*, p. 255. & ſeq. That the writings of Hermes and a great part of the forged Goſpels, together with various works of a ſimilar nature, the diſgraceful productions of this century, are to be attributed to the perfidious machinations of the Gnoſtics, is clear beyond a queſtion.

found

found amongſt them numerous patrons, namely, that thoſe who made it their buſineſs to deceive with a view of promoting the cauſe of truth, were deſerving rather of commendation than cenſure [*q*]. CENT. II.

VIII. But whilſt the circumſtances above enumerated conſpired moſt happily to forward the cauſe of Chriſtianity, the prieſts and præfects of the different religions that were publicly tolerated in the Roman empire, moſt ſtrenuouſly exerted themſelves to arreſt its progreſs, not only by means of the fouleſt accuſations, calumnies, and lies, but by frequently exciting the ſuperſtitious multitude to acts of wanton and outrageous violence [*r*]. Theſe efforts of the heathen prieſthood the emperors zealouſly ſeconded by various proſcriptive edicts and laws, the magiſtrates and preſidents of provinces by ſubjecting the faithful followers of Chriſt to puniſhments and tortures of the moſt excruciating kind, and finally ſeveral philoſophers and orators by declamation and cavil; in ſhort, throughout the whole of this century the Chriſtians had to contend with an almoſt infinite ſeries of injuries and evils, and even under the very beſt and moſt mild of the emperors that Rome ever knew, were in various diſtricts and State of the Chriſtians under the reign of Trajan.

[*q*] See what I have collected in regard to this, in my Diſſertation *de turbata per recentiores Platonicos Eccleſia*, § 41, & ſeq.

[*r*] Arnobius *adv. Gentes*, lib. i. p. 16. edit. Herald. *Aruſpices has fabulas*, (the calumnies againſt the Chriſtians) *conjectores, arioli, vates, et nunquam non vani concinnavere fanatici; qui, ne ſuæ artes intereant, ac ne ſtipes exiguas conſultoribus excutiant jam raris, ſi quando vos velle rem venire in invidiam compererunt, negliguntur dii clamitant, atque in templis jam raritas ſumma eſt.* In regard to this paſſage the reader may conſult what is ſaid by Heraldus.

provinces

CENT. II.

State of the Chriſtians under the reign of Trajan.

provinces expoſed to calamities of the moſt afflictive and grievous nature. At the time of Trajan's acceſſion to the government of the empire there were neither laws nor edicts of any kind in exiſtence againſt the Chriſtians. That this was the caſe is clear beyond a doubt, as well from other things that might be mentioned, as from the well known epiſtle of Pliny to Trajan, in which he ſignifies to the emperor, that he was altogether at a loſs how to proceed with people of this deſcription. Had any laws againſt the Chriſtians been at that time in force, a man ſo well verſed in the cuſtoms and juriſprudence of the Romans as Pliny was, muſt undoubtedly have been acquainted with them. The fact unqueſtionably was, that the laws of Nero had been repealed by the ſenate, and thoſe of Domitian by his ſucceſſor Nerva. So difficult however is it to abrogate what has once acquired the force of cuſtom, that the Chriſtians, as often as either the prieſts or the populace, ſtirred up by ſuperſtition and prieſtcraft, thought proper to inſtitute a perſecution of them, continued ſtill to be conſigned over to puniſhment. It was this which gave occaſion to Euſebius to ſtate that under the reign of Trajan, *per ſingulas urbes populari motu* paſſim *perſequutio in Chriſtianos excitabatur* [*s*]. Such a perſecution took place not long after the commencement of this century in Bithynia, at the time when Pliny the Younger was preſident of that province at the inſtigation, no doubt, of the prieſts [*t*].

IX. The

[*s*] Euſebius, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. iii. cap. 32. p. 103.

[*t*] We allude to the perſecution treated of by Pliny in that very celebrated epiſtle of his to the emperor, the

IX. The attack, however, thus made on the Chriſtians in Bithynia, eventually occaſioned a reſtraint to be put on that immoderate fury with which it had become cuſtomary to perſecute them. For it having been moſt clearly aſcertained by Pliny, that with the exception of their diſſent from the public religion, there was nothing in the principles or conduct of the followers of

CENT. II.

Trajan's reſpecting the Chriſtians.

xcvii[th] of the 10th book. From this epiſtle it is manifeſt that Pliny himſelf had no wiſh to interfere with the Chriſtians, but was reluctantly compelled by ſpies and informers to call them before him and puniſh them. *Interim*, ſays he, *in iis, qui ad me tanquam Chriſtiani deferebantur hunc ſum ſequutus modum.* That theſe informers againſt the Chriſtians were the heathen prieſts is, I think, clearly to be inferred from the following words: *Certe ſatis conſtat prope jam deſolata templa cœpiſſe celebrari, et ſacra ſolemnia diu intermiſſa repeti, paſſimque venire victimas quarum adhuc rariſſimus emptor inveniebatur.* In this paſſage the proconſul moſt plainly intimates the cauſe of this perſecution to have been, that the temples in Bithynia were nearly abandoned, the ſacred ſolemnities intermitted, and ſcarcely any victims ever preſented for ſacrifice. But all theſe things could affect none but the prieſts and thoſe who had the ſuperintendance of the ſacred rites; for to theſe alone could it be of any material moment that the temples ſhould be frequented and victims be brought to the altars. There can be no doubt then, but that theſe men had repreſented to Pliny, into what great jeopardy the rites of heatheniſm were brought, and it is not at all unlikely that by way of giving additional force to their repreſentations they had ſtirred up the populace to clamour for the puniſhment of the Chriſtians. In compliance with theſe applications, Pliny commanded thoſe perſons who, as he ſays, had been pointed out to him by an informer to be apprehended, and found amongſt them two Chriſtian deaconeſſes; the preſbyters, together with the biſhop, having moſt probably either taken to flight on the breaking out of the perſecution, or otherwiſe found means to ſhelter themſelves from its effects. When I, moreover, compare the words of Pliny, with the paſſage cited above from Arnobius, not a doubt remains with me but that he is to be conſidered as delivering, not ſo much his own ſentiments, as thoſe which he had collected from the mouths of the prieſts.

CENT. II.

Trajan's law reſpecting the Chriſtians.

Chriſt deſerving of animadverſion, and it being at the ſame time perceived by him, that their enemies in their proceedings againſt them had no regard whatever either to equity or clemency, he requeſted of the emperor Trajan, that the mode of coercing the Chriſtians might be regulated by ſome certain law, intimating his own opinion to be, that on account of their great number and evident innocence they ſhould be treated rather with moderation than ſeverity. In anſwer to this it was ordered by the emperor, that the Chriſtians for the future ſhould not be officiouſly ſought after, but that if any of them ſhould be brought before the Roman tribunals in a regular way and convicted, they ſhould, unleſs they would renounce Chriſtianity and again embrace the public religion, be conſigned over to puniſhment. From the firſt part of this regulation we may naturally infer, that the emperor did not regard the Chriſtians with an unfavourable eye, whilſt, from the latter part, it is as obviouſly to be collected that he was fearful of diſcovering too much lenity towards them, leſt he ſhould thereby exaſperate the prieſthood and the populace [*u*].

X. This

[*u*] It was generally believed for many centuries that the emperor Trajan was the author of the third perſecution of the Chriſtians, and we find this very diſturbance which they experienced in Bithynia under the government of Pliny, particularly adverted to in an infinite number of books, as the commencement of ſuch perſecution. But it is ſcarcely poſſible for any thing to be farther removed from the truth than theſe two notions are. Trajan, ſo far from having given orders to perſecute the Chriſtians, exerted his authority to reſtrain the perſecution of them, which broke out under his reign in Bithynia and other places. Without doubt he was conſiderably in the wrong in giving directions that perſons convicted of having embraced Chriſtianity and refuſing

X. This decree of Trajan being registered amongſt the public ordinances of the Roman empire, refuſing to return to the religion of their anceſtors ſhould be conſigned over to capital puniſhment; a thing for which he is ſharply and eloquently rebuked by Tertullian (in *Apologet.* cap. ii.); but moſt unqueſtionably it was of the higheſt advantage to the Chriſtians that he forbad any ſearch or inquiry to be made after them. For under this arrangement the Chriſtians might hold their ſecret aſſemblies in ſecurity, and by merely obſerving the dictates of common prudence, might effectually defeat all the malice of their enemies. Nor could the prieſts any longer take occaſion, from the emptineſs of the temples, and the rarity of victims, to compel the magiſtrates to call in queſtion the Chriſtians. It alſo ſupplied the magiſtrates with the power of ſilencing and putting down any popular clamour or ſeditions. But this illuſtrious act of beneficence, for which the Chriſtians were indebted to Trajan, loſt not a little of its effect, as I have before obſerved, by the mandate which was annexed to it for puniſhing ſuch as might be convicted of being Chriſtians, and refuſe to recant; in which, as has, after Tertullian, been obſerved by ſeveral, the emperor diſagrees with himſelf. For whilſt by forbidding them to be ſearched for or enquired after, he avows to the world that there was nothing in them pregnant with danger to the ſtate, or in anywiſe deſerving of puniſhment, he, in the next breath, by ordering the execution of ſuch as when convicted of having embraced Chriſtianity might perſiſt in profeſſing it, pronounces them to be guilty of a crime that could ſcarcely be puniſhed with too great ſeverity. This inconſiſtency of Trajan with himſelf, may be be beſt accounted for by ſuppoſing him to have been fearful that he might irritate the prieſts and the multitude, and perhaps excite popular commotions, if he ſhould grant an abſolute impunity to men labouring under ſo great ill will; his conduct in this reſpect was certainly not influenced by ſuperſtition, for had he been actuated by this principle he would not have forbidden, but on the contrary have commanded the Chriſtians to be ſought after, with a view to avenge the inſult offered by them to the gods. With regard however to the puniſhment ordered to be inflicted on obſtinate Chriſtians, another reaſon may be aſſigned. Pliny had written to him that the obſtinacy of the Chriſtians was, in his judgment, of itſelf, a crime deſerving of death, although there appeared to be nothing improper in the religion

CENT. II.

Effects produced by this law of Trajan.

CENT. II.

Effects produced by this law of Trajan.

empire, was the cauſe of many Chriſtians being thenceforward put to death, even under the moſt mild and equitable emperors. For as often as any one was to be found who would run the riſque of becoming an accuſer, and the perſon accuſed did not deny the crime imputed to him; nothing further was left to the magiſtrate than to endeavour, by threats and torture, to ſubdue the conſtancy of the perſon thus convicted; which if he failed to effect, the pertinacious and obſtinate delinquent was, according to this law of Trajan, to be delivered over to the executioner. Under this regulation Simeon the ſon of Cleopas and biſhop of Jeruſalem, an old man of one hundred and twenty years of age, being about the year cxvi, accuſed by the Jews before the præfect of Syria, and perſiſting for ſeveral days, although put to the torture, in an absolute refuſal to repudiate Chriſtianity, was, contrary

ligion which they refuſed to renounce: *neque enim dubitabam, qualecumque eſſet quod faterentur, pervicaciam certe & inflexibilem obſtinationem debere puniri.* The opinion, thus expreſſed by Pliny, although unjuſt, and obviouſly unworthy of a man of his intelligence, the emperor thought proper to adopt, and the Chriſtians were in conſequence conſigned over to puniſhment, not as men who had inſulted the gods, and were inimical to the public religion, but as citizens who refuſed to pay obedience to the mandates of their ſovereign. Whether the former or the latter of theſe reaſons may be preferred, certain it is, that neither in Pliny's epiſtle nor in the decree of the emperor is there any enmity manifeſted towards the Chriſtian religion, or any traces of ſuperſtition to be diſcovered. Thoſe who conſider the diſturbance thus experienced by the Chriſtians on the borders of the Euxine as the commencement of a general perſecution of them under Trajan, ſeem not to be aware that from this very epiſtle of Pliny, as well as from other arguments, it can be made appear that the Chriſtians had in the time of Trajan been put to trouble in various places before ever Pliny had been appointed to the government of Bithynia.

to

to the inclination of his judge, condemned to suffer death upon the croſs [*v*]. In conformity to this ſame law likewiſe, Ignatius the renowned biſhop of Antioch, who had been accuſed by the prieſts, and was not to be moved by the threats of even the emperor himſelf, was in the courſe of the ſame year brought to Rome by an imperial order, and delivered over as a prey to wild beaſts [*w*]. But what will no doubt appear to the reader particularly aſtoniſhing is, that this ſufficiently harſh and inhuman law excited the diſcontent of ſuch of the Chriſtians as glowed with a more fervid zeal, on account of its lenity, inaſmuch as for want of inquiry being made by the magiſtrate, or of ſome one being found to ſtep forward as an accuſer, they were often times precluded from finiſhing their earthly courſe by a glorious and triumphant ſacrifice of their lives in the cauſe of Chriſt. Hence it be-

CENT. II.

Effects produced by this law of Trajan.

[*v*] Vid. *Euſebius Hiſtor. Eccleſ.* lib. iii. cap. xxxii. p. 103. & ſeq.

[*w*] The *Acts of the Martyrdom of Ignatius* have been frequently publiſhed, and are to be found amongſt the *Patres Apoſtolici*. Of the antiquity of the work there can be no doubt; it ſhould ſeem however to have been corrupted in ſeveral places. From theſe Acts it appears, that Trajan adhered moſt ſcrupulouſly to the proviſions of his own law. In the firſt place he did not lay hands on Ignatius until the latter was regularly brought before the public tribunal by an accuſer; in the next place, when the accuſed confeſſed himſelf guilty of the charge, he endeavoured by various arts of perſuaſion to prevail on him to execrate the name of Chriſt, and join in the worſhip of the Roman deities; and laſtly, finding him altogether inflexible in his determination not to renounce Chriſtianity, he adjudged him to ſuffer death. We alſo learn from theſe Acts that the emperor deemed it inexpedient to let this holy man ſuffer at Antioch, leſt the fortitude which he diſplayed might operate to increaſe the veneration for his character, and alſo have the effect of augmenting the number of the Chriſtians.

CENT. II. came by no means unuſual for numbers of them voluntarily to hand over their names as Chriſtians to the Judges [*x*]. This unſeaſonable eagerneſs to obtain the honours of martyrdom, however, having in the courſe of time become perniciouſly prevalent, it was at length deemed expedient to repreſs it by a law.

State of the Chriſtians under the reign of Hadrian.

XI. Although the law of which we have been ſpeaking was not in any reſpect repealed or altered by the emperor Hadrian, who ſucceeded Trajan in the year of our Lord cxvii, nor had the Chriſtians to complain of any infringement of it by the preſidents or inferior magiſtrates, yet by the heathen prieſthood means were at length diſcovered for enervating its force, and rendering its protection of the objects of their hatred inefficient. Finding that but few individuals could be prevailed on to take upon themſelves the unthankful and perilous office of an accuſer, they

[*x*] A very remarkable inſtance of this kind of proceeding is mentioned by Tertullian (in *Lib. ad Scapulam*, cap. v. p. 88. opp. edit. Rigalt.) as having occurred under the reign of Hadrian. *Arrias Antoninus in Aſia cum perſequeretur inſtanter*, (*i. e.* according to the law of Trajan he cauſed all ſuch as were accuſed before him and convicted, to be executed) *omnes illius civitatis Chriſtiani ante tribunalia ejus ſe manufacta obtulerunt*, (that is to ſay, being diſcontented at no one's coming forward againſt them as an accuſer, and perceiving that the proconſul was determined ſtrictly to abide by the emperor's injunction, and not to make any inquiry after them, they reſolved to become accuſers of themſelves,) *cum ille, paucis duci juſſis, reliquis ait:* Ω δειλοὶ εἰ τίλιτε ἀποθνήσκειν, κρημνὸς ἢ βρόχος ἔχετε. *O miſeri, ſi mori vultis, nec lacus vobis deſunt nec præcipitia.* The proconſul no doubt felt particularly delicate as to puniſhing the Chriſtians who had thus become accuſers of themſelves, ſince it was a caſe that had not been provided for by the emperor: having therefore by way of terror made an example of a few, he diſmiſſed the reſt with marks of indignation and contempt.

made

made it their buſineſs, on every favourable occaſion, to excite the lower orders of the people to join in one general diſorderly clamour for the puniſhment of the Chriſtians at large, or of certain individuals amongſt them, whom they were taught to conſider as particularly obnoxious. Amongſt other opportunities that offered, they were accuſtomed particularly to avail themſelves of thoſe ſeaſons when the multitude were drawn together by the exhibition of any public games or other ſpectacles. To general and public accuſations of this ſort no degree of hazard whatever was attached; whilſt on the other hand it was a thing of no ordinary danger amongſt the Romans to turn a deaf ear to them, or treat them with diſreſpect. In conſequence of theſe tumultuary denunciations therefore, a conſiderable number of Chriſtians, at different times, met their fate, whom the magiſtracy would otherwiſe moſt willingly have permitted to remain unmoleſted [*y*]. Indeed, under the reign of Hadrian it

CENT. II.

State of the Chriſtians under the reign of Hadrian.

[*y*] Nothing could be more artful than this contrivance of the prieſts to enervate and elude the law of Trajan reſpecting the mode of accuſing the Chriſtians. For the preſidents did not dare to regard with an inattentive ear the demands of the united commonalty, leſt they might give occaſion to ſedition. Moreover, it was an eſtabliſhed privilege of the Roman people, grounded either on ancient right or cuſtom, of the exerciſe of which innumerable inſtances are to be found in the Roman hiſtory, that whenever the commonalty were aſſembled at the exhibition of public games and ſpectacles, whether it were in the city or the provinces, they might demand what they pleaſed of the emperor or the preſidents, and their demands thus made muſt be complied with. Properly this privilege belonged to the Roman people alone, whoſe united will poſſeſſed all the force of a law, inaſmuch as the ſupreme majeſty of the empire was ſuppoſed to be reſident therein; but by little and little the ſame thing came to be aſſumed as a right by

CENT. II.

it was ſo much the more eaſy for the heathen prieſthood to get the multitude to unite in one general clamour for the deſtruction of the Chriſtians, ſince, as Euſebius expreſsly relates, the Gnoſtic ſects, which ſeem to have been made up in part of evil deſigning perſons, and in part of madmen and fools, were at that time continually obtruding themſelves on the attention of the world; and the crimes and infamous practices of which theſe were guilty, being indiſcriminately imputed to the Chriſtians in general, the public prejudice was in no ſmall degree increaſed againſt the whole body of them. [z].

Hadrian's new law in favour of the Chriſtians.

XII. This highly iniquitous and impious artifice of the prieſthood being ſeen through by Serenus Granianus the proconſul of Aſia, he addreſſed a letter to the emperor on the ſubject, pointing out what an unjuſt and inhuman thing it was, to be every now and then ſhedding the blood of men convicted of no crime, merely with a view to ſilence the clamours of a miſguided tumultuous rabble. Nor was the repreſentation of this diſcerning and judicious man diſregarded by his maſter: for an edict was ſoon after directed by Hadrian to Minutius Fundanus, the ſucceſſor of Serenus, and to the other governors of provinces, forbidding them to pay attention to any ſuch public denunciations, and ſignifying it to be his pleaſure, that for the fu-

the inhabitants of moſt of the larger cities. When the multitude therefore collected together at the public games united in one general clamour for the puniſhment of the Chriſtians at large, or of certain individuals belonging to that ſect, the preſidents had no alternative but to comply with their demand, and ſacrifice at leaſt ſeveral innocent victims to their fury.

[z] Euſebius *Hiſtor. Eccleſ.* lib. iv. cap. vii. p. 120. & ſeq.

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ture no Chriſtians ſhould be put to death except ſuch as had been legitimately accuſed and convicted of ſome ſort of crime [*a*]. Poſſibly

CENT. II.

Hadrian's new law in favour of the Chriſtians.

[*a*] This imperial reſcript is given by Juſtin Martyr, in his firſt Apology *pro Chriſtianis*, § 68, 69. p. 84. opp. edit. Benedict. and copied from thence by Euſebius, *Hiſtor. Eccleſ.* lib. iv. cap. ix. p. 123.—That it was ſent not only to Minutius, but alſo to the other preſidents of provinces, is manifeſt from a remarkable paſſage of Melito cited by Euſebius, *Hiſtor. Eccleſ.* lib. iv. cap. xxvi. p. 184. as alſo from an edict of Antoninus, *ad commune Aſiæ*, of which we ſhall preſently have to ſay more. Regarding this law of Hadrian in a general way, it appears in point of juſtice and clemency by far to ſurpaſs the edict of Trajan. For whereas it was directed by the latter that ſuch Chriſtians as obſtinately refuſed to renounce the religion they profeſſed ſhould be puniſhed capitally, the law of Hadrian forbids any Chriſtian to be put to death except he were convicted according to the legal and eſtabliſhed mode, of having tranſgreſſed the Roman laws. This ſeems to admit of being adduced as a proof, and indeed has been ſo brought forward by many, that Hadrian tolerated the Chriſtian religion, and forbad any one to be perſecuted on account of profeſſing it. But I cannot help ſuſpecting that this is giving the emperor credit for more lenity than it was ever his intention to diſplay, ſince I obſerve, that even after the promulgation of this reſcript, the Chriſtians were continually put to death without having any other crime objected to them than that of their religion. Trajan had enacted, that for any one inflexibly to perſevere in the profeſſion of Chriſtianity ſhould be a crime puniſhable with death, and Hadrian does not appear to have directed that this kind of perſeverance ſhould be conſidered in a leſs criminal light. I therefore do not conceive that this law of Hadrian, in its import, differed very materially from that of Trajan, but that the puniſhment of death continued ſtill to be inflicted under the imperial ſanction on all ſuch Chriſtians as were convicted of profeſſing a contempt for the gods, and perſiſted in refuſing to alter their opinion. *Si quis ergo accuſat et oſtendat quidpiam contra leges ab iis factum, tu pro gravitate delicti ſtatue.* The form of expreſſion is at leaſt ambiguous, and left to the preſidents the moſt ample power of puniſhing the Chriſtians, ſince the worſhip of the gods was a thing enjoined by the laws.

CENT. II.

Hadrian's new law in favour of the Chriſtians.

alſo the two maſterly apologies for the Chriſtians, that were drawn up and preſented to the emperor by thoſe pious and learned characters, Quadratus and Ariſtides, and of which we of the preſent day have unfortunately to regret the loſs, might have contributed not a little to the ſoftening of the imperial mind [*b*]. This lenity of Hadrian towards the Chriſtians was looked upon by ſome as indicative of a diſpoſition to favour the Chriſtian religion, and therefore when he ſubſequently cauſed temples without images to be erected in all the cities, a ſuſpicion aroſe in the minds of many that he had it in contemplation to aſſign to Chriſt a place amongſt the deities of Rome, and meant to conſecrate theſe edifices to his ſervice [*c*].

XIII. The

[*b*] Theſe apologies are treated of by Euſebius *Hiſtor. Eccleſ.* lib. iv. cap. iii. with whom compare Jerome *Epiſt. ad magnum Oratorem*, p. 656. tom. iv. opp. edit. Benedict. and in *Catalog. Scriptor. Eccleſ.*

[*c*] Our authority for this is Lampridius *in Vita Alexandri Severi*, cap. xliii., who after remarking that Alexander wiſhed to have aſſigned Chriſt a place amongſt the Roman deities, continues, *quod et Hadrianus cogitaſſe fertur, qui templa in omnibus civitatibus, ſine ſimulacris, juſſerat fieri. Quæ ille ad hoc paraſſe dicebatur: ſed prohibitus eſt ab iis, qui conſulentes ſacra repererant, omnes Chriſtianos futuros ſi id optato eveniſſet.* The hiſtorian in this place evidently gives us the conjecture of the multitude, which, from his own words, appears to have been grounded ſolely on the circumſtance of Hadrian's having erected a number of temples, in none of which were placed any ſtatues of the gods, and which, reſting on no better foundation, muſt have been extremely vague and uncertain. The ſuſpicion excited by the erection of theſe temples could never have ſuggeſted itſelf, had it not been for the opinion previouſly entertained of the emperor's leaning towards Chriſtianity. But from whence this opinion took its riſe I am unable to ſay, unleſs it was from the equity and humanity diſplayed by him in his edict reſpecting the Chriſtians. Probably the prieſts and their adherents, upon finding themſelves cut

off

CENT. II.

XIII. The Chriſtians, however, had under the reign of Hadrian to encounter a ſtill more fierce and cruel enemy in a leader of the Jews named Barchochba, or, "the ſon of the ſtar", whom his infatuated countrymen regarded as the long promiſed Meſſiah who was to reſtore the fallen fortunes of the houſe of Iſrael. Impatient of the injuries and contemptuous treatment which they were continually experiencing at the hands of the Romans, the Jews had once already, during the reign of Trajan, had recourſe to arms for redreſs. The experiment entirely failed; but their wretchedneſs and calamities continuing ſtill to increaſe, theſe hapleſs people, at the inſtigation, and under the conduct of the abovementioned daring character, a man thoroughly converſant in blood and rapine, were, in the year cxxxii, induced to hazard a repetition of it [*d*]. During the continuance of the war which he had thus excited, Barchocba ſubjected to the moſt cruel tortures as many of the Chriſtians as he could get within his power, and put all ſuch of them

Barchochba an enemy of the Chriſtians.

off from all hopes of ſuppreſſing the Chriſtians, might diſſeminate a rumour that the emperor himſelf was by no means ill diſpoſed towards this new religion. But how vain and futile theſe conjectures were is rendered manifeſt, as well by the whole tenor of his life, which was replete with inſtances of the groſſeſt ſuperſtition, as by the poſitive teſtimony of Spartian (*in Vita Hadrian.* cap. xxii.) whoſe words are *ſacra Romana diligentiſſime curavit; peregrina contempſit.* It may be added, that with regard to the temples erected by Hadrian without any ſtatues of the gods, very able men have long ſince declared it to be their opinion, that the emperor intended to have had them dedicated to himſelf.

[*d*] Vid. Euſebius, *Hiſtor. Eccleſ.* lib. iv. cap. 6. Buxtorfius, *Lexico Talmudico, voce* בכב where the reader will find every thing that is to be met with in the Jewiſh writings reſpecting this man collected into one view.

to

CENT. II.

to death without mercy as refuſed, in ſpite of the various torments thus inflicted on them, to abjure Chriſtianity [*e*]. The event of this conteſt, which was for a while maintained on both ſides with incredible valour, was moſt diſaſtrous to the Jews. An innumerable hoſt of this ill-fated people having fallen by the ſword, and Paleſtine being almoſt wholly depopulated, the dreadful ſcene was cloſed by Hadrian's ordering Jeruſalem, which had juſt begun to revive again from its aſhes, to be finally overthrown and laid waſte, and cauſing a new city, called after himſelf Ælia Capitolina, to be erected on a part of its ſcite [*f*]; at the ſame time debarring the Jews from every acceſs to ſuch new city, as well as to any of their former ſacred places in its neighbourhood, under the ſevereſt penalties [*g*].

Barchochbas an enemy of the Chriſtians.

XIV. Upon the death of Hadrian, ſo immediately did the aſpect of affairs change, that it ſeemed as if his reſcript reſpecting the Chriſtians had expired with him. For ſcarcely had Antoninus Pius aſſumed the government of the empire, when the Chriſtians found themſelves aſſailed in various places by numerous accuſers, who being obliged by the abovementioned edict of Hadrian to alledge ſome ſort of crime againſt them, and probably finding the more equitable of the preſidents, diſinclined to conſider the bare

State of the Chriſtians under Antoninus Pius.

[*e*] Juſtin Mart. *Apolog.* ii. *pro Chriſtianis*, p. 72. edit. Pariſ. Hieron. *Catalog. Script. Eccleſ. in Agrippa Caſtore.*

[*f*] A particular hiſtory of this new city has been given to the world by the learned Deyling. It is annexed to the fifth volume of his father's *Obſervationes Sacræ.*

[*g*] See amongſt others, Juſtin Martyr, *Dialog. cum Tryphone*, p. 49. 278. edit. Jebbian. Sulpitius Severus, *Hiſtor. Sacr.* lib. ii. cap. xxxi. p. 245. edit. Cleric. Hieronymus, *Comment. in Sophoniam*, c. 2.

profeſſion

profeſſion of Chriſtianity in that light, had recourſe to the expedient of charging them with impiety or atheiſm. This new attack was met by Juſtin Martyr with an apology preſented to the emperor, in which he ably repels various other calumnies with which the Chriſtians were aſſailed, as well as completely vindicates them againſt this laſt attrocious charge of impiety. The effect however produced by this apology was but trifling. At length an immediate application having been made to the emperor by ſeveral of the magiſtrates, for the purpoſe of aſcertaining the extent to which the populace, who were thus continually calling for the blood of the Chriſtians, were to be gratified in their demands, he commanded them to take for their direction the law of Hadrian, and not put any Chriſtian to death unleſs it ſhould appear that he had committed ſome crime againſt the ſtate [*b*]. But even this was not found ſufficient to prevent thoſe ebullitions of popular fury which the prieſthood continually made it their buſineſs to promote. For in conſequence of ſome earthquakes which ſhortly after occurred in Aſia, and which the prieſts, with their accuſtomed malevolence, aſcribed to the diſpleaſure of the gods at the toleration of the Chriſtians, the multitude burſt through every reſtraint, and heaped on theſe fancied authors of their calamities every

CENT. II.

State of the Chriſtians under Antoninus Pius.

[*b*] This appears not only from the emperor's edict *ad commune Aſiæ*, but alſo from the words of Melito, *apud* Euſeb. *Hiſtor. Eccleſ.* lib. iv. cap. xxvi. p. 148. who reminds the emperor Marcus Aurelius that his father addreſſed letters to the Lariſſeans, the Theſſalonians, the Athenians, and in fact to the Greek provinces in general, forbidding them to have recourſe to any tumultuary proceedings againſt the Chriſtians.

ſpecies

CENT. II.

State of the Chriſtians under Antoninus Pius.

ſpecies of outrage and injury. A repreſentation of the grievous afflictions to which they were thus exposed having been ſubmitted to the emperor by the Chriſtians, he addreſſed a ſevere edict to the whole region of Aſia, commanding, that unleſs the Chriſtians ſhould be convicted of ſome ſort of crime they ſhould be diſcharged with impunity, and that the puniſhment to which, in caſe of conviction, they would have been ſubjected, ſhould, upon their acquittal, be inflicted on their accuſers [*i*].

XV. The

[*i*] An imperial edict to this effect is extant in Euſebius (*Hiſtor. Eccleſ.* lib. iv. cap. xiii. p. 126.) who ſays, that he took it from Melito's Apology for the Chriſtians, addreſſed to the emperor Marcus. By certain of the learned, however, this edict has been thought not to belong to Antoninus Pius, but to his ſucceſſor Marcus Aurelius; but the reaſons on which this opinion are grounded are, unleſs I am altogether deceived, of no weight whatever. For to paſs over the teſtimony of Euſebius, as well as certain particulars in the edict itſelf, which are not in the leaſt applicable to Marcus, there are two things which in my opinion moſt clearly prove that Euſebius was not wrong in aſcribing it to Antoninus Pius. In the firſt place Euſebius copied it from an apology addreſſed by Melito to the emperor Marcus. But who can believe, if Marcus Aurelius had publiſhed ſuch an edict reſpecting the puniſhment of the accuſers of the Chriſtians, that Melito would have deemed it neceſſary to write a work expreſsly for the purpoſe of exciting in him a compaſſion for the Chriſtians? In the next place, thoſe earthquakes of which the edict makes mention, and which gave occaſion to the people of Aſia to commence their attack on the Chriſtians. occurred in the time of Antoninus Pius. *Adverſa*, ſays Capitolinus, (in his Life of Antonine, cap. ix. p. 268. tom. i. *Scriptor. Hiſt. Auguſt.*) *ejus temporibus hæc provenerunt: Fames de qua diximus, circi ruina*, Terræ Motus, *quo Rhodiorum et* Aſiæ oppida conciderunt: *quæ omnia mirifice inſtauravit.* But it is clear that thoſe of the learned who attribute this edict to the emperor Marcus, do ſo merely with a view to extenuate the afflictions which the Chriſtians ſuffered under Antoninus Pius, and to make it appear as if, after the ſlight perſe-

XV. The ſecurity and tranquillity enjoyed by the Chriſtians under this edict of Antonine laſted

CENT. II.

State of the Chriſtians under Marcus Aurelius.

perſecution to which they were expoſed at the commencement of Antoninus's reign, the Chriſtians had enjoyed, as it were, a perfect calm to the very end of his government. In doing this, however, they have paid a greater regard to their own private opinion, than to the faith of hiſtory. Notwithſtanding, moreover, that the iſſuing of this edict by Antonine was unqueſtionably productive of conſiderable advantage to the Chriſtian cauſe, and impoſed a reſtraint on the officious forwardneſs of evil-diſpoſed perſons, yet the intereſts of Chriſtianity would have been benefited in a much higher degree had he repealed that law of Trajan, which awarded the puniſhment of death to all ſuch Chriſtians as ſhould be convicted of having abandoned and refuſe to return to the religion of their anceſtors. The law of Trajan was however ſuffered to remain in full force, and yet at the ſame time this edict of Antonine, of a nature altogether repugnant to it, was introduced into the forum. Iniquitous and cruel judges might therefore, if they thought proper, cauſe both the accuſer and the accuſed to be put to death; the former under the edict of Antoninus Pius, the latter under that of Trajan, which none of the emperors had thought it proper to repeal. Of a caſe of this kind a very notable example is recorded by Euſebius in his *Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory*, lib. v. cap. 21. p. 189. Apollonius, a man reſpectable for his gravity and learning, was, under the reign of Commodus accuſed of being a Chriſtian. The judges forthwith condemned his accuſer to have his legs broken and to be put to death: for by the edict of Antonine it was ordained, that capital puniſhment ſhould be inflicted on all accuſers of this ſort. But by theſe ſame judges was Apollonius himſelf alſo, after that he had publicly rendered an account of the religion that he profeſſed, and openly acknowledged himſelf to be a Chriſtian, adjudged to ſuffer death. For by an ancient law, ſays Euſebius, it was enacted, that if any Chriſtian ſhould be once regularly brought before the public tribunal, they ſhould on no account be diſmiſſed with impunity, unleſs they would repudiate their religion. Now what other ancient law could this be that was ſo directly repugnant to the edict of Antonine than the reſcript of Trajan to Pliny? By thus artfully having recourſe to ancient laws that had not been expreſsly repealed, did the iniquity and injuſtice of the Roman ma-

CENT. II.

State of the Chriſtians under Marcus Aurelius.

laſted no longer than until the year clxi, when the government of the empire paſſed into the hands of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, who from his great attachment to the Stoic ſyſtem of diſcipline acquired the ſurname of "The Philoſopher." At the very commencement of this emperor's reign the ancient practice of preferring public accuſations againſt the Chriſtians was vigorouſly reſumed; and as many of the perſons thus accuſed as acknowledged themſelves to be followers of the religion of Chriſt, and refuſed to change their tenets, were delivered over to the executioner. Upon this occaſion it was that Juſtin Martyr addreſſed to the emperor his ſecond apology for the Chriſtians, a compoſition much reſembling his former one, both as to ſtyle and argument; but which was ſo far from exciting in the mind of the emperor any thing like lenity or compaſſion towards thoſe on whoſe behalf it was drawn up, that after its appearance the calamities of the Chriſtians were increaſed throughout the whole of the Roman empire. Nor did it appear ſufficient to the emperor to free the enemies of Chriſtianity from thoſe reſtraints which his father had impoſed on them: but by the publication of various edicts inimical to the Chriſtians he held out, as it were, an invitation or incitement to the people to become their accuſers [*k*]. It appears, indeed, as

giſtrates frequently find means to deprive the Chriſtians of every benefit to which they were entitled under enactments of a more recent date.

[*k*] Melito in his Apology *apud* Euſeb. *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. iv. cap. xxvi. p. 147. makes expreſs mention of certain new edicts promulgated againſt the Chriſtians in Aſia, in conſequence of which they were expoſed to open attacks from the vileſt of men, both by day and by night: and that

as well from other authorities, as particularly from the tract written by Athenagoras in defence of the

CENT. II.

State of the Chriſtians under Marcus Aurelius.

that theſe edicts muſt have been of the moſt harſh and ſevere kind is unqueſtionable, ſince Melito adds, that the new imperial edict, καινον διαταγμα, was ſo extremely inhuman, that the iſſuing of it even againſt barbarous enemies would not have been juſtifiable: ὁ μὴ δὲ κατὰ βαρβάρων πρέπει πολεμίων. Melito, indeed, profeſſes himſelf to be ignorant whether or not this edict was iſſued by the emperor. But this could ſurely be nothing more than a prudent diſſimulation in him. For who would ever have been ſo bold as to forge imperial edicts? Who amongſt the judges could have been found ſufficiently daring to give to theſe fictitious edicts the force of real ones? And, with no better ſanction than could be afforded by ſuch fraudulent mandates to deprive Roman citizens of their lives and worldly poſſeſſions? The crime was of that magnitude that it could ſcarcely have ſuggeſted itſelf to the mind even of the moſt hardened wretch; and to its execution ſo many difficulties would have been oppoſed, that no one but a madman could have promiſed himſelf the leaſt ſucceſs in attempting it. In enumerating therefore the real and actual perſecutors of the Chriſtians we muſt, after recording the names of the emperors Nero and Domitian, aſſign the third place to that imperial philoſopher, whoſe wiſdom has not ceaſed to command admiration, even in the preſent day, the moſt ſapient Marcus Aurelius; inaſmuch as he was the author of ſuch laws againſt the Chriſtians as a juſt and good man would never have enacted, even againſt a ſet of barbarous enemies. For the emperors that had intervened between Domitian and him, inſtead of exciting, had uniformly ſtudied to repreſs and diſcountenance any perſecution of the Chriſtians. A fact with which the emperor is in no very obſcure terms upbraided by Melito, although the ſtate of the times in which he wrote obliged this apologiſt to ſpeak with ſome reſerve. It were to be wiſhed that this edict of the emperor Marcus had reached our days, ſince without doubt we ſhould have been able to gather from it the grounds of that hatred which he had conceived againſt the Chriſtians. But to the primitive profeſſors of Chriſtianity it appeared more expedient to ſink the remembrance of the laws by which the progreſs of their religion was oppoſed, than to perpetuate it. A hint, however, is ſupplied by one paſſage in Melito, which may enable us, with ſome de-

CENT. II.

State of the Chriſtians under Marcus Aurelius.

the Chriſtians, that Marcus did not abſolutely repeal the edict of his father which forbad the Chriſtians to be put to death unleſs they ſhould be convicted of ſome ſort of capital offence [*l*]; but

gree of probability, to gueſs at the nature of this infamous edict. By this law of the emperor Marcus, he ſays, the moſt ſhameleſs characters, and thoſe who were covetous of other men's property (τῶν ἀλλοτρίων ἐραστὰι), were invited to turn informers againſt the Chriſtians, and to hunt after them both by day and by night. Now the concluſion to which theſe words inevitably lead is, that in this edict there was a proſpect held out to avaricious and money-loving men of increaſing their own wealth by the ſpoliation of others. This then being eſtabliſhed, it ſeems to be highly credible, indeed almoſt certain, that the emperor held out pecuniary recompence as an allurement to people to become accuſers of the Chriſtians, and directed that the goods and other property of thoſe who might be convicted of any crime, ſhould be adjudged to the perſons through whoſe exertions the delinquents had been brought to juſtice. Such a law might not indeed fail to produce its deſigned effect on the minds of thoſe who coveted other men's goods, but ſuch a law was very juſtly characteriſed by Melito, when he pronounced it altogether unworthy of a good and wiſe emperor. It was not in this way that Nero, it was not in this way that Domitian attacked the Chriſtians.

[*l*] It is clear from various documents, and from this tract of Athenagoras in particular, that the enemies and accuſers of the Chriſtians under the reign of Marcus, endeavoured with the utmoſt earneſtneſs to fix on them three different ſpecies of crimes. 1ſt. The moſt unqualified impiety or atheiſm. 2dly. The celebrating of Thyeſtean banquets, that is, feaſting on the fleſh of murdered infants. 3dly. Œdipodean or inceſtuous ſexual intercourſe. Hence I think it is manifeſt, that it was not the will of the emperor to have the Chriſtians put to death merely on account of their religion, but that he confirmed the law of Antoninus. For if it had been ſufficient to accuſe the Chriſtians of defection from the religion of their anceſtors, and manifeſting a contempt for the gods of the country, as it was under the reign of Trajan, there could have been no neceſſity for charging them with calumnies like the above. But as the laws of the empire were particularly ſtrict in regard

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but, through the iniquity of the judges, the greateſt facility was afforded to accuſers in eſtabliſhing any falſe charges which they might bring forward againſt the Chriſtians; and the accuſed, in defiance of the laws of the empire, were, without either being regularly convicted of, or confeſſing themſelves to have committed, any ſort of crime, declared to have incurred the penalty of death [*m*].

State of the Chriſtians under Marcus Aurelius.

From

to accuſers, and forbad any Chriſtian to be put to death unleſs convicted of ſome ſort of crime, there was no other courſe left open to the malice and improbity of the enemies of Chriſtianity but to deviſe certain heinous offences, and endeavour by every poſſible means to fix them on its profeſſors.

[*m*] The hiſtory of the perſecution at Lyons, which took place, as I have elſewhere ſhewn, under the reign of this emperor, in the year clxxvii. affords a very ſufficient illuſtration of what is here ſtated. This perſecution had its origin in a popular tumult or contention that took place between the Chriſtians and the heathen worſhippers. During its continuance a great many of the former were caſt into priſon; but owing to no one's coming forward as an accuſer, and proving them to have committed ſome ſort of crime, the hands of the magiſtrates were completely tied up in regard to them. By way, therefore, of obtaining an oſtenſibly legal ſanction for the gratification of their malice, the ſoldiers and other enemies of the Chriſtians prevailed, by means of threats, on certain of the ſervants of thoſe whom they had apprehended, to become accuſers of their maſters. But what theſe wretches charged their maſters with was not ſacrilege, or a contempt for the public religion, but actual crimes, and thoſe identical crimes too, which, under the reign of Marcus, were, by ſlander, attributed to the Chriſtians, namely the celebrating of Thyeſtean banquets, and an inceſtuous ſexual intercourſe. To this teſtimony of ſervants againſt their lords the judges gave credit, or rather pretended to give credit; and, in defiance of the order of proceeding preſcribed by the law, put the Chriſtians to the rack; endeavouring, by torments of various kinds, to extort from them a confeſſion of what they were thus charged with. In vain was it that theſe

CENT. II.

State of the Chriſtians under Marcus Aurelius.

From whence this ill-will of the emperor towards the Chriſtians proceeded, is not to be aſcertained from any memorials that have reached our times. It may, with great probability, however, be conjectured, that from the repreſentation of the philoſophers, to whoſe guidance he appears entirely to have ſurrendered himſelf, he was led to regard the Chriſtians as a ſet of abſurd, irrational, obſtinate and conceited men;

unfortunate people perſiſted, with the utmoſt conſtancy, to the laſt, in aſſerting themſelves innocent; their fate had been predetermined on; they were pronounced guilty, and were in conſequence conſigned over to various kinds of death. Vid. Euſebius, *Hiſtor. Eccleſ.* lib. v. cap. 2. There can be no doubt but that, in the other provinces, a nearly ſimilar courſe was followed; ſo as to preſerve ſomewhat of an impoſing air of juſtice, and make it appear as if the Chriſtians were condemned, not for their religion, but on account of their crimes. And here we cannot but direct the reader's attention to the peculiar infelicity of the times of Marcus Aurelius, than whom a juſter or more ſapient emperor is ſuppoſed never to have exiſted! The monarch, a prince in no reſpect ill inclined, gave himſelf up to philoſophical meditation, and troubled himſelf but little as to the way in which the concerns of his empire might be managed. In the mean time, the magiſtrates taking advantage of this his indifference as to ſtate affairs, made every thing conform itſelf to their will and pleaſure, and ſcrupled not moſt groſsly to violate thoſe laws for which they profeſſed themſelves to entertain the higheſt veneration. They made no ſearch or inquiry indeed, after the Chriſtians, ſince that would have been contrary to the edict of Trajan; they furthermore manifeſted their reſpect for the laws of the empire by not inflicting puniſhment on any Chriſtian, unleſs accuſed as ſuch; and not only accuſed of being a Chriſtian, but alſo proved by witneſſes to have committed ſome heinous offence. But then, to ſuit their own purpoſes, the would, as we have ſeen, admit the teſtimony of ſlaves, and the vileſt refuſe of mankind; and upon no better evidence than that of the vileſt of mortals, would condemn men as guilty, whoſe conſtancy in proteſting their innocence even torments of the moſt excruciating nature were found unable to ſubdue.

and therefore, upon the principles of that harſh and rigid ſyſtem of moral diſcipline to which he was devoted, conceived it expedient rather to deſtroy than to tolerate them [*n*].

CENT. II.

State of the Chriſtians under Marcus Aurelius.

XVI. Under

[*n*] It has for a long time been with me a matter of doubt whether the emperor Marcus Aurelius was ſo great a character as he has been eſteemed for ages, and ſtill continues to be conſidered by almoſt every one capable of forming an opinion on the ſubject. If our eſtimate of him be indeed drawn ſolely from thoſe of his writings which remain, it ſeems to be ſcarcely poſſible that his worth ſhould be over-rated; but if his actions be taken into the account, and brought to the teſt of reaſon, we ſhall find the matter wear a very different aſpect. That he was a good man, although in no ſmall degree a ſuperſtitious one, is what I do not in the leaſt doubt; but that he at all merited the title of a good emperor and prince, is to me a matter of ſome queſtion. But for the preſent I will paſs over this, and content myſelf with briefly inquiring whether the condition of the Chriſtians was not worſe under the reign of this philoſopher and man of genius, than it had ever been under that of any of the preceding emperors who were ſtrangers to philoſophy. To the opinion of ſuch of the learned as attribute the ill-will of Marcus Aurelius towards the Chriſtians to ſuperſtition, I feel it impoſſible for me to ſubſcribe. Had ſuperſtition given riſe to his ſeverity, he would, without doubt, have conſidered their religion alone as a ſufficient reaſon for commanding them to be puniſhed; but that ſuch was not his opinion is certain, as we have above pointed out. By far more likely is it, that his immoderate lenity, which was but little removed from utter careleſſneſs and ſloth, and which originated in that ſtoical evenneſs and ſeverity of mind which they denominate apathy, occaſioned him to ſhrink from the trouble of curbing the licentiouſneſs of evil diſpoſed men, and alſo made him look with a tranquil indifference on actions highly criminal and oppreſſive. To which it may be added, that a man devoted to contemplation, and employing a conſiderable portion of his time in philoſophical ſpeculations, probably cared but little as to what was done in the empire, or as to the fidelity and uprightneſs with which the preſidents and magiſtrates might diſcharge the important duties appertaining to their various

CENT. II.

XVI. Under no emperor, therefore, ſubſequently to Nero, were the Chriſtians expoſed to weightier, or

Afflictions of the Chriſtians under the reign of Marcus.

offices. The conjecture, however, which, in my opinion, comes neareſt to the truth, is, that the philoſophers by whom he was beſet, and who held the Chriſtians in deteſtation, inſtilled into his mind a wrong idea of the Chriſtian tenets; and having to deal with a man of a credulous and eaſy diſpoſition, found means to perſuade him, that in the worſhippers of Chriſt, an irrational, turbulent, and pernicious ſect had ariſen, a ſect in fact, which it was on every account highly proper to repreſs; and in this opinion I am confirmed by a remarkable paſſage in the eleventh book of his work, *De Rebus ad ſe pertinentibus*, § iii. wherein he profeſſes himſelf to entertain but an unfavourable opinion of the fortitude and contempt of death exhibited by the Chriſtians. Marcus himſelf had never ſeen any of the Chriſtians encounter death; and therefore, for whatever he may have reported of their behaviour under ſuch trying circumſtances, he muſt unqueſtionably have been indebted to the magiſtrates, and thoſe philoſophers by whom he was ſurrounded, and who, of courſe, did not fail to repreſent them in that light in which it was their wiſh for him to regard them. The words of Marcus are: "To what an admirable ſtate muſt that ſoul have arrived which is prepared for whatever may await her—to quit her earthly abode, to be extinguiſhed, to be diſperſed, or to remain! By prepared I mean, that her readineſs ſhould proceed from the exerciſe of a calm, deliberate judgment, and not be the reſult of mere obſtinacy, like that of the Chriſtians; and that it ſhould be manifeſted, not with oſtentatious parade, but in a grave, conſiderate manner, ſo as to make a ſerious impreſſion on the minds of other people." In this paſſage, the fortitude diſplayed by the ſtoics in the act of death, is compared by the emperor with the conſtancy of the Chriſtians under ſimilar circumſtances. For the former he expreſſes a reſpect; of the latter he evidently ſpeaks with contempt. Under the influence, and with the never-failing ſupport of reaſon, the philoſopher is repreſented as encountering death with a deliberate ſteadfaſtneſs of ſoul, or, in other words, as meeting death with tranquillity, becauſe he knows that death can never be productive of evil to him; whilſt the Chriſtian, on the contrary, if we liſten to the emperor Marcus, dies altogether irrationally, without any other confidence or conſolation

or more numerous afflictions than they ſuffered during the reign of the illuſtrious Marcus Aurelius,

CENT. II.

Afflictions of the Chriſtians under the reign of Marcus.

ſolation than what is ſupplied by a certain ſtubbornneſs and pertinacity of mind, for which no pretext is to be found either in common ſenſe or reaſon. From hence it is manifeſt, that thoſe who poſſeſſed the ear of the emperor had perſuaded him that the Chriſtians were a ſet of irrational, rude, illiterate, ignorant men, an opinion which led him naturally to conclude, that the alacrity with which they encountered death could only be the fruit of obſtinacy and perverſeneſs. Whoever they might be that inſtilled into the mind of the emperor ſuch an idea of the Chriſtians, they moſt certainly practiſed on him a very baſe impoſition; ſince the Chriſtians were poſſeſſed of weightier, and by far better reaſons for meeting death without diſmay, than ever the whole race of ſtoics had been able to ſupply, and in the fortitude which they diſplayed on quitting this earthly ſtate, were influenced by a much ſounder judgment than that by which the ſtoic ſect were governed. But it cannot excite our wonder that the emperor, after his mind had received the above impreſſion, ſhould deem it expedient to extirpate the Chriſtians. Dangerous, truly, muſt have been a ſect which encouraged its votaries to encounter every ſort of torment unappalled, and meet even death itſelf with diſdain, upon no better a principle than that of a ſullen, blind, irrational obſtinacy. But to proceed with the emperor's contraſted portraits. The philoſopher, we are told, encounters death with firmneſs and compoſure, unaccompanied by any tragical diſplay: that is, unleſs I entirely miſtake the emperor's meaning, he does not, like thoſe who make their exit on the ſtage, indulge in declamation, and endeavour to gain over the minds of the ſpectators by an affected bombaſtic kind of eloquence, but preſerves a magnanimous ſilence, and meets his fate with a quiet and unſhaken dignity. Not ſuch, ſays Marcus, is the conduct of the Chriſtian; for he, regardleſs of what propriety would ſuggeſt, appears to take the deaths exhibited in tragedies for his model; and when the fatal moment arrives, expatiates at length on his hilarity, his hope, his confidence, and his contempt of death. The emperor, no doubt, had heard that it was cuſtomary for the Chriſtians, in the concluding act of their lives, to offer up thankſgivings to Almighty God, to commend their ſouls into his keeping by fervent prayer, to exhort the ſpectators to

CENT. II.

Afflictions of the Chriſtians under the reign of Marcus.

Aurelius, whom poſterity have been taught to regard as the beſt and wiſeſt emperor that Rome ever ſaw. Nor were there ever more *apologies* ſent forth into the world on behalf of the Chriſtians than were in his time offered to the public; for in addition to Juſtin Martyr, of whom we have already ſpoken, Melito, biſhop of Sardis, Athenagoras, a philoſopher of Athens, Miltiades, Theophilus of Antioch, Tatian the Aſſyrian, and others whom it is unneceſſary to enumerate, made it their buſineſs, in various literary productions, as well to render the innocence and piety of the Chriſtians unqueſtionable, as to demonſtrate the ſanctity of the religion which they profeſſed, and to expoſe the madneſs and abſurdity of thoſe other religious ſyſtems to which the world in general was ſo fondly attached. Of theſe works there are ſome that have reached our days, but others have periſhed through the ravages of time[o]. Amongſt

renounce ſuperſtition, to glorify Chriſt in hymns, and to do many other things of a like kind; which could not fail to appear diſpleaſing in the eyes of a ſtoic, whoſe leading maxims were, that it was incumbent on a wiſe man to maintain at all times an uniformity of aſpect and demeanor; that every diſturbance of the mind was reprehenſible; and finally, that under every change of circumſtances, by whatever brought about, the moſt perfect equability or evenneſs of temper was invariably to be preſerved. Under the influence of ſentiments like theſe, it was natural for the emperor to conſider the Chriſtians as meeting death, not in a philoſophical way, but rather in the ſtyle of tragic characters. Hence alſo, may we account for his being moved but little by their afflictions. Indeed, according to the principles of the ſect to which he belonged, he ought not to have known what it was to be moved at all.

[o] The apologies of Miltiades and Melito are thoſe of which we have to regret the loſs; the reſt are ſtill extant.

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the many who, under the reign of Marcus, were put to death for their adherence to the religion of Chriſt, the moſt diſtinguiſhed were thoſe very celebrated characters, Juſtin the philoſopher, who ſuffered at Rome, and Polycarp, who met his fate at Symrna. Both of theſe ſealed their attachment to the cauſe of their bleſſed Maſter with their blood, in the year clxix [*p*]. To none, however, hath poſterity aſſigned a higher place in its eſtimation than to the Chriſtians of Lyons and Vienne, who, in the year clxxvii, were, in great numbers, made to encounter death under various excruciating and terrific forms, in conſequence of their having been falſely charged by certain of their inferior ſervants or ſlaves, with the commiſſion of crimes almoſt too ſhocking even to be named. The moſt eminent of theſe Gallic martyrs, was Pothinus the biſhop and parent of the church of Lyons, a venerable character of the age of ninety and upwards, who, not long before, had, with certain others, travelled from the eaſt into Gaul, and with great care and induſtry eſtabliſhed there that Chriſtian church or aſſembly, which was doomed, in a particular manner, to experience the devaſtating fury of this very remarkable and tremendous perſecution [*q*].

CENT. II.

Afflictions of the Chriſtians under the reign of Marcus.

XVII. It

[*p*] The acts of the Martyrdom of Juſtin Martyr and Polycarp are to be found in Ruinart's *Acta Martyrum ſincera et ſelecta*, and in ſome other works. Concerning the year and month of Polycarp's death, the reader may conſult a very copious and learned diſſertation of the Abbé Longerue in Winckler's *Sylloge Anecdotorum*, p. 18. 25.

[*q*] Reſpecting this perſecution of the Lyoneſe, without queſtion the moſt celebrated, and in all probability the moſt bloody and cruel that took place in any part of the Roman empire during the reign of Marcus, there is extant

CENT. II.

XVII. It is ſaid, however, that ſome ſhort time before his death, namely, in the year clxxiv, the

The miracle of the Thundering Legion.

in Euſebius, *Hiſtor. Eccleſ.* lib. v. cap. 2. an excellent epiſtle from the church of Lyons to the brethren in Aſia and Phrygia, which I ſhould conceive it impoſſible for any one to read without emotion. The thing, as we have above obſerved, although pre-determined on, was yet carried into effect under a ſpecious ſhew of legal formality, leſt the laws of the empire ſhould appear to have been in any reſpect infringed. The circumſtances of the affair were briefly theſe: A popular tumult having been excited reſpecting the Chriſtians, and many of them having, with a view to quiet the public mind, been thrown into priſon, certain of their ſervants were prevailed upon by threats to come forward and accuſe their maſters of having committed very heinous offences, namely, thoſe identical crimes which, during the reign of Marcus, had been very cuſtomarily imputed to the Chriſtians. Having in this way eſtabliſhed ſomewhat of a colourable ground whereon to act, the magiſtrates proceeded to inflict tortures of various kinds on the impriſoned Chriſtians; and even went ſo far as to put many of them to death. The number of perſons confined, however, being conſiderable, and one of them, a man of ſome conſequence, named Attalus, having declared himſelf a Roman citizen, the preſident of the province ſeems to have felt that he had been too precipitate, and would not venture to proceed farther in the buſineſs without aſcertaining the emperor's pleaſure. The matter having been ſubmitted by him to the emperor, Marcus wrote back word, that "all ſuch as profeſſed themſelves Chriſtians ſhould be put to death, but that thoſe who denied being ſo, ſhould be diſmiſſed uninjured." Under the authority of this anſwer, therefore, capital puniſhment was inflicted on all who refuſed to renounce Chriſtianity; ſuch of them as were Roman citizens being beheaded, and the reſt caſt for a prey to wild beaſts. This reſcript of the emperor to the preſident of Lyons ſeems to place his inveterate enmity towards the Chriſtians in the cleareſt light imaginable; ſince, if reſpect be had ſolely to his words, as above-cited from Euſebius, he gives exactly the ſame commands as Trajan did, and allows the Chriſtians to be put to death on account of their religion alone, without any thing criminal being alleged againſt them. But, it muſt be confeſſed, that there is a difficulty in coming to any certain concluſion with

the ſentiments of Marcus underwent a conſiderable change with reſpect to the Chriſtians, and that in conſequence of his having been very eſſentially benefited by them on a particular

CENT. II.

The miracle of the Thundering Legion.

with regard to the ſenſe of this reſcript, ſince the letter of the preſident to the emperor is not now extant. What the preſident wrote, in all probability, was, that the Chriſtians ſtood convicted by the teſtimony of a ſufficient number of credible witneſſes of having committed many very great crimes in their ſecret aſſemblies, but that this charge was denied by the accuſed with the utmoſt pertinacity, (at leaſt in this way it was certainly neceſſary for him to write, if his object was to excuſe the cruelty he had exerciſed upon ſo many of theſe unfortunate people) and that it had therefore become requiſite for him to apply to the emperor for direction as to whether the witneſſes or the Chriſtians themſelves were to be believed. Suppoſing then the preſident to have written to the emperor in theſe or any ſimilar terms, the imperial anſwer will admit of this conſtruction;—With regard to the truth of an accuſation which has been ſubſtantiated according to the rules of law, we ſee no reaſon for entertaining any doubt. From ſuch therefore of the perſons implicated as will not conſent to abjure Chriſtianity we deem it proper to withhold our pardon; but ſhould there be any who are inclined to return to the religion of their forefathers, it is our will that they ſhould be ſet at liberty. At leaſt the abſence of the preſident's letter, ſo neceſſary to a right underſtanding of the emperor's anſwer, leaves us altogether in a ſtate of uncertainty as to which conſtituted the prevailing motive with Marcus in directing the puniſhment of the Chriſtians, their religion or their crimes. With regard to the time of this perſecution, the reader will find it proved in a diſſertation of mine *de Ætate Apologiæ Athenagoræ, (Syntagm. Diſſert. ad Hiſtor. Eccleſ. pertin.* vol. i. p. 315.) by irrefragable arguments, that it did not take place as has been conjectured by certain of the learned in the year 167, but in 177. Compare *Colonia Hiſtoire litteraire de la ville de Lyon*, tom. ii. Sæc. ii. p. 34. and *Baratier de Succeſſione Romanor. Pontiff.* p. 207. 217. That the church of Lyons, however, had been but recently eſtabliſhed when this grievous affliction befel it, its own epiſtle, as preſerved by Euſebius, moſt clearly demonſtrates, for the Aſiatic brethren are therein (p. 156.) told that in the multitude of Chriſtians who ſuffered on that occaſion were comprehended thoſe by whoſe labour and induſtry chiefly the church there had been firſt eſtabliſhed.

occaſion,

CENT. II.

The miracle of the Thundering Legion.

occaſion, in the courſe of a war in which he was engaged with the Marcomanni and the Quadi, two of the braveſt German nations, he was induced entirely to relieve them from every ſort of penalty and hazard to which they had been previouſly expoſed. The ſtory is, that being ſo effectually ſurrounded on all ſides by the enemy, during a ſeaſon of ſevere and long continued drought, as not to be able to gain acceſs to any place from whence water might be obtained, the Roman emperor and his forces were in the moſt imminent danger of periſhing from heat and thirst. When things however were arrived at the laſt extremity, a band of Chriſtians, who were at that time ſerving in Marcus's army, having earneſtly cried to heaven for aſſiſtance, the Almighty was pleaſed at once to manifeſt a regard for their prayers, by cauſing the clouds on a ſudden to pour down rain in abundance, accompanied with thunder and lightning. Reanimated by the very critical relief thus afforded them, the Romans loſt not a moment in attacking their enemies, whom this alteration in the aſpect of the heavens had filled with conſternation and diſmay, and ſucceeded in obtaining over them a moſt ſignal and important victory. This wonderful event made a very deep impreſſion on the mind of the emperor, and ſo entirely changed his ſentiments with regard to the Chriſtians, that he publicly proclaimed to the world his conviction of their virtue and good faith towards him, and decreed that the heavieſt puniſhments ſhould await all their enemies and accuſers. Such is the account given of the matter by the early Chriſtian writers. But it muſt not paſs without remark that in this narrative there are

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CENT. II.

The miracle of the Thundering Legion.

ſome things manifeſtly falſe; and that with regard to the critical fall of rain accompanied with thunder and lightning, to which the Roman army was indebted for its preſervation, it poſſeſſes not the characteriſtic features of a true and unqueſtionable miracle; but may, without any difficulty, be accounted for upon natural grounds, and without in the leaſt interfering with the eſtabliſhed laws of divine providence [*r*].

XVIII. During

[*r*] Concerning the thundering legion, who are reported through their prayers to have obtained from heaven a copious fall of rain, by which the emperor Marcus and his army were extricated from a moſt perilous ſituation, at a moment when every expectation and hope of relief had entirely vaniſhed, a controverſy of no little length was ſome time back carried on amongſt the learned; ſome contending that the event ought to be aſcribed to the immediate interference of the Deity himſelf, who for the moment made a change in the eſtabliſhed order of nature for the purpoſe of producing an amelioration in the condition of the Chriſtians who were living in a moſt wretched ſtate of oppreſſion under Marcus; whilſt others maintained that in what actually happened there is nothing to be diſcovered which manifeſts any thing like a deviation from the ordinary and eſtabliſhed laws by which the univerſe is governed. The arguments on either ſide are to be collected from a diſſertation of Daniel Laroque *de Legione Fulminatrice* ſubjoined to the *Adverſaria Sacra* of Matthew Laroque his father, and a diſcourſe by Herman Witſius on the ſame ſubject, annexed to his *Ægyptiaca*. Of theſe writers the former impugns the truth of the miracle, the latter ſtrains every nerve to defend it. At a ſubſequent period ſome letters paſſed on the ſubject between Sir Peter King, lord chancellor of Great Britain,* and Mr. Walter Moyle an Engliſh gentleman of diſtinguiſhed ſagacity and erudition, a Latin tranſlation of which, accompanied with ſome remarks of my own, will be found at the end of my *Syntagma Diſſertationum*

* Dr. Moſheim has here fallen into an error. Mr. Moyle's correſpondent on this occaſion was not the lord chancellor King, but the Reverend Richard King of Topſham in Devonſhire.

ad

CENT. II.

XVIII. During the reign of Commodus, the ſon and immediate ſucceſſor of Marcus, no very

State of the Chriſtians under Commodus and Severus.

ad diſciplinas ſanctiores pertinentium. King, ſides with thoſe who maintain that Marcus and his army were ſaved by a miracle; Moyle takes the field in ſupport of the contrary poſition. As for any other authors who may have written on the ſubject, they do nothing more than either merely repeat, or elſe endeavour, in one way or other, to ſtrengthen and confirm the arguments which had been previouſly adduced by their above mentioned predeceſſors. For my own part, I can perceive no call for my entering much at large into this affair, and I ſhall therefore content myſelf with ſtating my opinion on it in a few words. And that I may do this with the greater regularity and preciſion, I will, in the firſt place, confine myſelf to a ſtatement of ſuch things as are, or at leaſt ought to be, granted to either party as indiſputable; my next ſtep ſhall be to point out what is evidently falſe: and, having diveſted the matter of theſe particulars, I will in the laſt place take into conſideration what remains of it, and which muſt of neceſſity compriſe all that can fairly and properly be made the ſubject of diſpute. In the firſt place then, it is certain that Marcus and his army were at one particular time in the courſe of his war with the Quadi and Marcomanni involved in a ſituation beyond all compariſon perilous. Marcus was better fitted to ſhine as a philoſopher than an emperor. Intimately acquainted as he was with the maxims and diſcipline of the ſtoics, he yet appears to have been a mere novice in the military art, and through his imprudence to have given the enemy ſuch advantages over him as nearly to involve both himſelf and his army in utter deſtruction. It is alſo certain, that he was unexpectedly extricated from this moſt critical ſituation by means of a copious fall of rain, accompanied with thunder and lightning, and obtained the victory. It is moreover unqueſtionable, that not only the Chriſtians, but alſo the emperor and the Romans, conſidered this ſudden fall of rain to which the army owed its preſervation as a præternatural event; with this difference however, that the former viewed it in the light of a miracle wrought by the God whom they worſhipped, in anſwer to their prayers, whilſt the latter conceived themſelves to be indebted for this ſignal deliverance to either Jupiter or Mercury. That ſuch was the light in which this event was regarded by the Romans is placed beyond all doubt by the united teſtimony of Dion Caſſius, Capitolinus, Claudian, and Themiſtius, but ſtill

very heavy or general perſecution of the Chriſtians appears to have taken place; at leaſt nothing

State of the Chriſtians under Commodus and Severus.

ſtill more particularly by the column erected by Marcus himſelf at Rome which remains in exiſtence at this day, and on which Jupiter (*Pluvius*) is repreſented as reinvigorating the parched and exhauſted Romans by means of a plentiful rain. That there were a number of Chriſtians at that time ſerving in the imperial army appears to be not quite ſo certain as the foregoing; and there are not wanting thoſe who expreſsly deny this to have been the caſe, on the ground that the ancient Chriſtians are known, for the moſt part, to have diſliked the military profeſſion, and held wars in abhorrence. But although this may be very true in a certain degree, it is yet to be proved from various cotemporary authorities, that in this century not a few of the Chriſtians did actually carry arms, and that the Chriſtians in general were not ſuch decided enemies to warfare of every kind as altogether to condemn a military life. For it can be ſhewn that they conſidered ſuch wars lawful as were neceſſarily entered into for the ſafety or defence of the empire, and had no objection to any of the brethren ſerving in ſuch patriotic wars; and no one can deny but that of this deſcription was the war carried on by Marcus againſt the Quadi and Marcomanni. It appears alſo that whenever any ſoldiers were led to embrace Chriſtianity, no ſuch thing as an abandonment of the profeſſion of arms was impoſed on them, but they were permitted to purſue that courſe of life to which they had previouſly devoted themſelves. There ſeems therefore to be nothing that ſhould oppoſe itſelf to our conſidering this alſo as certain, that amongſt the ſoldiers of Marcus there were many Chriſtians. But if this admit of no doubt, it is impoſſible not to grant it as likewiſe unqueſtionable, that when the Roman army was reduced to ſuch an extremity for want of water as to have nothing ſhort of utter deſtruction before their eyes, theſe Chriſtian ſoldiers, conformably to the dictates of the religion which they profeſſed, addreſſed themſelves to God in prayers for relief. The ſame men would doubtleſs attribute the unexpected fall of rain, accompanied with thunder and lightning, and the conſequent diſcomfiture of their enemies, to the ſpecial interference of the Almighty on their be-

CENT. II.

nothing of this kind is recorded by any hiſtorian. There are not wanting, however, individual

State of the Chriſtians under Commodus and Severus.

half; would offer up their thanks to him as the author of their deliverance, and in their report of the thing to their abſent brethren, would ſtate, that in conſequence of their prayers to Chriſt, the Roman army had been extricated from a ſituation beyond all compariſon adverſe and perilous. Attending duly to this, it muſt be eaſy for any one to perceive, not only how the rumour of this miracle aroſe, but alſo how it came to be a matter of firm belief with the Chriſtians that the Romans had been ſaved through the prayers of the brethren. Having then thus diſmiſſed what may be conſidered as certain, I next proceed to point out ſuch particulars as cannot appear credible to any perſon converſant in hiſtory, and which the induſtry of ſome very eminent ſcholars of modern times has ſtripped of even that ſemblance of truth which they might formerly wear. In the firſt place then, it is falſe, although apparently ſupported by the authority of Apollinaris as quoted by Euſebius, that there was a ſeparate and entire legion of Chriſtians in the Roman army. For, to paſs over many other things which go completely to refute this idea, it is certain that Chriſtianity was not, under the reign of Marcus, ſo far countenanced, as for it to appear credible that even a ſeparate cohort, and much leſs a legion of Chriſtians ſhould have been tolerated in the Roman armies. Since this leading circumſtance then appears to have no foundation whatever in truth, it muſt of neceſſity be falſe, that when every hope had vaniſhed this legion preſented themſelves in front of the army, and implored the divine aſſiſtance; it muſt be falſe, that before ever their prayers were finiſhed, the fall of rain, accompanied with thunder and lightning, took place; and finally falſe that the emperor attributed the glory of having extricated his army, to this legion, and that by way of manifeſting his ſenſe of their ineſtimable deſerts, he conferred on them the title of *The Thundering Legion*. The thundering legion, it has been clearly proved by Scaliger and Henry Valeſius, as well as by other learned men ſince their time, was in exiſtence anterior to the reign of Marcus, and could conſequently never have derived its diſtinguiſhing name from this miracle. The probability is, that ſome Chriſtian but little acquainted with the Roman military eſta-

dividual inſtances of Chriſtians that were put to death during this period, the moſt remarkable

CENT. II.

State of the Chriſtians under Commodus and Severus.

eſtabliſhment, having heard that amongſt the legions there was one diſtinguiſhed by the name of the Thundering Legion, was induced haſtily to conclude that this title had been given to it in conſequence of the thunder with which God had on this occaſion anſwered its prayers, and paſſed off what was merely a gratuitous aſſumption of his own, on others for the fact. Moreover, that Marcus did not conſider himſelf as indebted for his deliverance to the favour in which the Chriſtians ſtood with heaven, is rendered indiſputable by the Antoninian column at Rome which was erected with the knowledge and conſent of this emperor, and on which the preſervation of the Roman army is aſcribed to Jupiter. Laſtly, theſe things being rejected as falſe, it becomes impoſſible for us to credit what is told us of letters having been iſſued publicly by Marcus in which the piety of the Chriſtians is extolled, and their enemies and accuſers are denounced. The epiſtle of Marcus to this effect, which is at this day extant and generally to be found added to the firſt apology of Juſtin Martyr, bears on the very face of it, as is confeſſed even by thoſe who in other reſpects ſupport the miracle of the Thundering Legion, the moſt manifeſt marks of fraud, and ſeems to have been the work of ſome man altogether unacquainted with Roman affairs, who lived moſt likely in the ſeventh century. Mention however having been made of theſe letters of Marcus by Tertullian in *Apologet.* cap. v. it has been concluded by many that ſuch documents were actually in exiſtence in his time, but that they afterwards periſhed through the ravages of time. The words of Tertullian are *at nos e contrario edimus protectorem ſi literæ Marci Aurelii graviſſimi imperatoris requirantur, quibus illam Germanicam ſitim Chriſtianorum forte militum precationibus impetrato imbri diſcuſſam conteſtatur.* But there are many things which tend to weaken and invalidate Tertullian's teſtimony in this inſtance. I paſs over the word *forte* in the above paſſage, which has been laid hold of by learned men as a proof, either that Tertullian was not ſatisfied of the truth of this miracle, or elſe that he had never ſeen thoſe letters of the emperor's; for to ſay nothing of what is contended for reſpecting the uſe of this particle by Tertullian, I ſee plainly that neither of the above points can be proved from it. The word manifeſtly relates, not to Tertullian, but to the

CENT. II. able of which is that of Apollonius a dignified and eminent character, who, together with

State of the Chriſtians under Commodus and Severus.

the emperor and his epiſtle, and the ſenſe of the paſſage is this; that Marcus did not explicitly own or avow that the fall of rain was obtained through the ſupplications of his Chriſtian ſoldiers, but expreſſed himſelf with ſome reſerve, and only ſignified that *poſſibly* this great benefit might have been derived from their prayers. I alſo paſs over the circumſtance that Tertullian in another place (*Libro ad Scapulam*, cap. iv. p. 87. ed. Rigalt.) where he ſimilarly makes mention of this rain, obtained through the prayers of the Chriſtians, is altogether ſilent as to the epiſtle of Marcus. But there are two things, for which we have not to ſeek very far, which, I think, muſt be allowed entirely to enervate and render nugatory the teſtimony which Tertullian is ſuppoſed, in the above cited paſſage, to afford in ſupport of theſe letters. The firſt is, that from what Tertullian has handed down to us reſpecting the purport of this imperial epiſtle, it is, unleſs I am moſt egregiouſly deceived, very plainly to be ſeen that the paper which he had before him at the time of his penning that paſſage, was a document to which we have before had occaſion to direct the reader's attention, namely, the edict *ad commune Aſiæ*, iſſued by Antoninus Pius, whom, we well know, it has been by no means an uncommon thing for writers to confound with his ſucceſſor Marcus Aurelius. For in proceeding with his ſtatement Tertullian obſerves, *ſicut non palam ab ejusmodi hominibus pœnam dimovit, ita alio modo palam diſperſit, adjecta etiam accuſatoribus damnatione et quidem tetriore.* Now the meaning of theſe words I take to be, firſt, that Marcus did not exempt the Chriſtians from every ſort of penalty to which they had been previouſly liable, that is, he did not abſolutely interdict or prohibit their being puniſhed: ſecondly, that he, however, contrived in effect to render theſe penalties, as it were, merely nominal; or in other words, that he wiſely ordered matters ſo as that the judges ſhould find it no very eaſy matter to bring the Chriſtians within the laſh of the law: and thirdly, that he ſuſpended over accuſers who ſhould fail in their proof a ſimilar puniſhment to that which would have awaited the accuſed on conviction. It will be ſufficient for me then, I conceive, to remark, that in theſe three reſpects the ſtatement of Tertullian moſt aptly agrees with the edict of Antoninus Pius *ad commune Aſiæ*. For by that edict the emperor did not exempt

CENT. II.

with his accuſer, underwent capital puniſhment at Rome [s]. The fact was, that none of the laws

State of the Chriſtians under Commodus and Severus.

[s] Vid. Euſebius, *Hiſtor. Eccleſ.* lib. v. cap. xxi. p. 189. Apollonius was put to death under the law of Trajan; his accuſer, as before noticed, under that of Antoninus Pius.

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exempt the Chriſtians from every kind of penalty; but he ordained that no Chriſtian ſhould be ſubjected to puniſhment unleſs convicted of ſome ſort of crime, and by this proviſion moſt certainly reſtricted, within very narrow limits, the power of puniſhing the Chriſtians at all: and, finally, he directed that ſuch accuſers of the Chriſtians as might fail of making good their charge againſt them, ſhould be puniſhed for their temerity. It appears to me, therefore, manifeſt, that Tertullian fell into the miſtake of imputing to the ſon the edict of the father, whoſe name was ſimilar; and that, having underſtood that Marcus and his army had experienced an unhoped for deliverance from a moſt perilous ſituation, through the prayers of the Chriſtians, he was led to conclude, that gratitude for ſo ſignal a benefit had actuated him to the promulgation of this edict. The ſecond thing which renders the teſtimony of Tertullian, as to the epiſtle of Marcus, a mere nullity, is the perſecution of the Chriſtians at Lyons and Vienne, of which we have above taken notice. This perſecution took place in the year clxxvii, in the third, or if you had rather, in the fourth year after the victory obtained over the Marcomanni and the Quadi. But who, let me aſk, can believe that the emperor, after having, in the year clxxiv, in a public epiſtle, paſſed the higheſt encomium on the Chriſtians, and declared that the heavieſt of puniſhments ſhould await their accuſers, ſhould all at once, in the year clxxvii, ſo entirely change his mind as to give them up for a ſacrifice to the malice of their enemies, and enact, that all ſuch of them as would not return to the religion of their anceſtors ſhould undergo captital puniſhment? Having diſencumbered the queſtion, then, of theſe particulars, the only thing that remains to be determined is, whether that fall of rain to which the Roman army owed its preſervation in the Marcomannic war, is to be accounted as one of thoſe extraordinary interpoſitions of divine providence which we term miracles?

CENT. II.

State of the Chriſtians under Commodus and Severus.

laws which had been enacted by different emperors reſpecting the Chriſtians, of which ſome indeed were lenient, but others moſt ſevere, having been repealed, the judges could at any time, when it might ſuit their humour, by ſtraining matters a little, contrive, with an apparent ſhew of juſtice, to inflict capital puniſhment on all ſuch Chriſtians as might be accuſed before them. Of this evil the full weight was never ſo ſenſibly experienced by the Chriſtians as under the reign of Septimius Severus, the ſucceſſor of Commodus. For although this emperor, upon his firſt aſſuming the government, manifeſted a diſpoſition to favour the Chriſtians, to one of whom he ſtood indebted

miracles? For if it can be aſcertained that it belongs to the claſs of miracles, there can be no doubt but that it ought to be attributed to the prayers of the Chriſtians who were at that time ſerving in the army of Marcus. Now, the queſtion, when thus ſimplified, appears to me extremely eaſy of ſolution. By the unreſerved aſſent of the learned it is now eſtabliſhed as a maxim, that nothing can properly be conſidered as belonging to the claſs of miracles, for the occurrence of which any natural cauſe can be aſſigned. But in this fall of rain, although it might not have been expected or even hoped for, there was nothing which it exceeded the ordinary powers of nature to accompliſh, nothing which of neceſſity required the peculiar interpoſition of Omnipotence. For nothing can be more common than for the long droughts of ſummer to be ſucceeded by copious falls of rain, accompanied with thunder and lightning in a degree truly terrific. Nor can it appear at all wonderful that ſome of the enemy ſhould have been ſtruck dead by the lightning, or that in conſequence thereof their whole army ſhould betake themſelves to flight; for it was the opinion of all the German nations that every thunder bolt was commiſſioned of the Deity himſelf; and, under the influence of this perſuaſion, it was cuſtomary for the effects of lightning to be regarded by theſe people as particularly ominous.

for

CENT. II.

State of the Chriſtians under Commodus and Severus.

for a very ſignal benefit [*t*]; yet under cover, as it ſhould ſeem, of the turbulence of the times which ſucceeded, the magiſtrates and enemies of Chriſtianity took occaſion to rekindle the flames of perſecution, and to carry their oppreſſion and cruelty to the greateſt extent. By the concurrence of abundant authorities, it is rendered indiſputable, that in ſome provinces, towards the cloſe of this century, the Chriſtians were expoſed to ſuch a dreadful ſeries of calamities and ſufferings as it had ſcarcely ever fallen to their lot to encounter before. It was the diſtreſſing view preſented by theſe accumulated miſeries of the brethren, which gave birth to that very ingenious and eloquent defence of the Chriſtians, the *Apologeticon* of Tertullian [*u*].

XIX. To

[*t*] Tertullian (in libro *ad Scapulam*, c. iv. p. 87. edit. Rigalt) ſays, *Ipſe Severus pater Antonini Chriſtianorum memor fuit. Nam et Proculum Chriſtianum, qui Torpacion cognominabatur, Euhodiæ procuratorem, qui eum per oleum aliquando curaverat, requiſivit, et in palatio ſuo habuit uſque ad mortem ejus: quem et Antoninus optime noverat, lacte Chriſtiano educatus. Sed et clariſſimas fœminas et clariſſimos viros, Severus ſciens hujus ſectæ eſſe, non modo non læſit, verum etiam teſtimonio exornavit, et populo furenti in nos palam reſtitit.* The ſame writer alſo, in his *Apologet.* cap. v. p. 62. edit. Havercamp. clearly excepts Severus out of the number of emperors that had diſcovered an enmity to the Chriſtians.

[*u*] From this work of Tertullian it is clearly to be perceived how impiouſly and cruelly the Chriſtians of that period were dealt with before ever Severus was prevailed on to take part againſt them. The common people, at the inſtigation, no doubt, of the heathen prieſts, called aloud for the blood of the Chriſtians; the other orders did not trouble themſelves about them. *Apologet.* cap. xxxv. p. 300. *Sed vulgus inquis. Ut vulgus, tamen Romani, nec ulli magis depoſtulatores Chriſtianorum, quam vulgus. Plane cæteri ordines pro auctoritate religioſi ex fide, nihil hoſticum de ipſo ſenatu, de equite, de caſtris, de palatiis ipſis ſpirat.* But it ſhould ſeem that ſome of the preſidents by no means

CENT. II.

XIX. To the flame thus prevailing in the breaſts of the prieſts and the populace, not a little

Philoſophers inimical to the Chriſtian cauſe.

thought the Chriſtians deſerving of puniſhment, but exerciſed their cruelty on them merely with a view of obtaining popular favour; for in c. xlix. p. 425, Tertullian preſſes this home upon them in the following terms: *De qua iniquitate ſævitiæ non modo cæcum hoc vulgus exultat et inſultat, ſed et quidam veſtrum quibus favor vulgi de iniquitate captatur, gloriantur, quaſi non totum quod in nos poteſtis, noſtrum ſit arbitrium.* The greateſt part of the magiſtrates, however, did not ſcruple to acknowledge the falſehood of the calumnies wherewith the Chriſtians were aſſailed, and were ready to admit the injury that was done them; but complained that, without a breach of various laws that ſtood unrepealed and in full force, it was impoſſible for them to turn a deaf ear to their accuſers. This excuſe is met by Tertullian with much addreſs, and combated at conſiderable length in chapters iv, v, & vi. His exordium is as follows: *Sed quoniam, cum ad omnia occurrit veritas noſtra* (But when, by a ſimple expoſure of the truth, we have fully refuted all thoſe calumnies and charges that are urged againſt us), *poſtremo legum obſtruitur auctoritas adverſus eam* (*i. e.* the truth) *ut aut nihil dicatur retractandum eſſe poſt leges* (*i. e.* that it would be inconſiſtent with Roman conſtancy to revoke, or deviate from, what has once been eſtabliſhed by law), *aut ingratis neceſſitas obſequii preferatur veritati,* (*i. e.* a judge, although it may be diſagreeable to him, and he may perceive that the cauſe of truth will ſuffer, ſhould yet, in his deciſions, adhere ſtrictly to the letter of the law) *de legibus prius excurram vobiſcum ut cum tutoribus legum.* Now, men who could in this way make the laws a cloak for their own injuſtice and cruelty, muſt certainly have been very worthleſs characters. If we except the law of Trajan, which permitted the Chriſtians to be called in queſtion merely on account of their religion, and directed them to be puniſhed in caſe they would not renounce it, the remaining imperial laws and reſcripts were rather favourable to the Chriſtians than otherwiſe; at leaſt there was not one of them to which a judge, if he had been ſo minded, might not have given a favourable interpretation. But it was neceſſary for theſe malevolent characters, theſe tools of the prieſthood, and candidates for popular fame, to diſguiſe their real motives under ſome pretext or other, and to make it appear as if they were borne out by

ſomewhat

little fuel was added by the writings of ſome of thoſe who affected to poſſeſs a more than ordinary ſhare of wiſdom and virtue, and were diſtinguiſhed by the titles of Philoſophers and

CENT. II.

Philoſophers inimical to the Chriſtian cauſe.

ſomewhat of reaſon in their deciſions. Such was, however, the ſpirit of ferocious violence with which this perſecution was carried on, that even the reſtraint impoſed by the law of Trajan with reſpect to making any ſearch after the Chriſtians, was diſregarded; for they were broken in upon and apprehended in their ſacred aſſemblies, without any accuſation having been laid againſt them. *Quotidie*, ſays Tertullian, cap. vii. p. 80. *obſidemur, quotidie prodimur: in ipſis plurimum cœtibus et congregationibus noſtris opprimimur.* So far, therefore, from ſtrictly adhering to what was dictated by the laws, theſe moſt unjuſt judges, in the ſeverities which they exerciſed towards the Chriſtians, did not ſcruple to fly directly in the teeth of the moſt poſitive injunctions. The puniſhments inflicted on the Chriſtians were as cruel as the enmity borne them by their enemies was ſavage. The following notices of them occur in Tertullian, cap. xii. p. 125, et ſeq. *Crucibus et ſtipitibus imponitis Chriſtianos. Ungulis eraditis latera Chriſtianorum. Cervices ponimus. Ad beſtias impellimur. Ignibus urimur. In metalla damnamur. In inſulas relegamur.* And in cap. xxx. p. 279, 280, we find nearly a ſimilar enumeration. It appears alſo, that the common people would not unfrequently expend their fury on the Chriſtians without the intervention of the magiſtrates, and run even into ſuch extremes of malice as to dig up their dead bodies from the grave for the purpoſe of tearing them to pieces. Cap. xxxvii. p. 308. *Quoties etiam præteritis vobis* (the preſidents) *ſuo jure nos inimicum vulgus invadit lapidibus et incendiis, ipſis Bacchanalium feriis: nec mortuis parcunt Chriſtianis, quin illos de requie ſepulturæ, de aſylo quodam mortis jam alios, jam nec totos, avellant, diſſecent, diſtrahant.* Now, all theſe things, it is obſervable, were done previouſly to the manifeſtation of any ill will towards the Chriſtians on the part of the emperor, and whilſt the laws that had been anciently enacted againſt them remained comparatively quieſcent, and, as it were ſuperſeded by others of rather a compaſſionate tendency. What, then, may we ſuppoſe to have taken place when Severus avowed himſelf the enemy of Chriſtianity, and not only revived, in all their rigour, the ancient laws reſpecting it, but added to them new ones of ſtill greater ſeverity?

CENT. II.

Philoſophers inimical to the Chriſtian cauſe.

Orators. Of theſe, one of the moſt celebrated was a diſciple of the modern Platonic ſchool, named Celſus, who, towards the cloſe of this century, attacked the Chriſtians in a declamation teeming with invective and reproach, which; at a ſubſequent period, was met by a very maſterly refutation from the pen of Origen [*v*]. At Rome likewiſe, nearly about the ſame time, the Chriſtians were aſſailed by one Creſcens,

[*v*] Origen, who, in the third century, was induced, by the advice of Ambroſius, to give to the world his well known confutation of the calumnies and falſehoods of Celſus, conceived his adverſary to have been an epicurean, for which, however, he ſeems to have had no other reaſon than that of there having been an epicurean of ſome celebrity of the name of Celſus. But if the opinions of Celſus were what even Origen himſelf ſtates them to have been, there can be no doubt but that he was utterly averſe to the doctrines of Epicurus, and belonged to what we term the modern Platonic or Alexandrian ſchool. The reader, who wiſhes to ſee this queſtion examined in detail, may conſult my Preface to the German tranſlation of Origen. Before the appearance, however, of any remarks of mine on the ſubject, it had been very learnedly ſhewn by that eminent ſcholar Pet. Weſſeling (*Probabilia*, cap. xxiii. p. 187. et ſeq.), that Celſus could by no means be conſidered as belonging to the claſs of the epicureans. We cannot cloſe this note without obſerving, that abundant proof is to be collected from the weak and injurious declamation of Celſus of the very great detriment which the cauſe of Chriſtianity ſuſtained in conſequence of the corruptions introduced by the Gnoſtics, who, ſubſequently to the time of Hadrian, had attained to ſome degree of conſequence and fame; for the exceptionable particulars on which this malevolent adverſary chiefly grounds his attack, were not recognized by thoſe of the orthodox faith as belonging to the Chriſtian ſcheme, but were merely fancied improvements that had been tacked to it by the Gnoſtics. Celſus, as appears from his own ſhewing, had been chiefly converſant with men of this latter deſcription, and fell into the error of attributing to the Chriſtians in general, maxims which were recognized only by this particular ſect.

a cynic

a cynic philoſopher, who, according to the prevailing cuſtom of the age, arraigned them of the groſſeſt impiety. His attack was in a particular manner directed againſt Juſtin Martyr, who had expoſed to the world the ſecret vices and deceptive arts of thoſe who ſtyled themſelves philoſophers; nor was it for a moment relinquiſhed until this very celebrated Chriſtian father had undergone the puniſhment of death [*w*]. As cotemporary with theſe, it ſhould ſeem that we may reckon Fronto, the rhetorician of Cirta in Africa, who made it his endeavour, in a ſtudied diſcourſe that he ſent abroad into the world, to eſtabliſh againſt the Chriſtians that vile calumny, ſo frequent in the mouths of the mob, of their countenancing an inceſtuous intercourſe of the ſexes [*x*]. Many more

CENT. II.

Philoſophers inimical to the Chriſtian cauſe.

[*w*] Vid. Euſebius, *Hiſtor. Eccleſ.* lib. iv. cap. xvi. as alſo the Second Apology *pro Chriſtianis*, of Juſtin himſelf, in which he predicts that the philoſophers, and particularly Creſcens, whoſe ignorance and corrupt morals he had made it his buſineſs to expoſe to the world, would endeavour by every poſſible means to bring about his deſtruction.

[*x*] There are two paſſages in Minucius Felix which relate to this calumniator of the Chriſtians; from one of which we learn his country, from the other his name and mode of life. In cap. x. *Octavius*, p. 99, where he treats of the Thyeſtean banquets, which the Chriſtians were accuſed of celebrating, he thus expreſſes himſelf: *Et de convivio notum eſt. Paſſim omnes loquuntur. Id etiam cirtenſis noſtri teſtatur oratio.* Then follows a deſcription of theſe feaſts, which, without doubt, was taken from the diſcourſe of Fronto, which he had juſt been praiſing. To this paſſage he thus replies in the words of his *Octavius*, cap. xxxi. p. 322. *Sic de iſto* (the banquet) *et tuus Fronto, non ut affirmator t.ſtimonium fecit, ſed convicium ut orator aſperſit.* By learned men it has been ſuſpected, and certainly not without great appearance of reaſon, that this Fronto was one and the ſame with Cornelius Fronto the rhetorician, who taught the emperor Marcus eloquence. As long as

CENT. II.

more perſons of this deſcription, in all probability, laboured to defame the Chriſtians; but neither their

Philoſophers inimical to the Chriſtian cauſe.

the Chriſtian church could number within its pale none but men who were unſkilled in letters and philoſophy, it was regarded with a ſilent diſdain by thoſe amongſt the Greeks and Romans who aſſumed to themſelves the title of philoſophers. But when, in the ſecond century, certain philoſophers of eminence became converts to the Chriſtian ſcheme, ſuch as Juſtin, Athenagoras, Pantænus, and others, without, however, renouncing either the name, garb, or mode of living of philoſophers, or giving up the inſtruction of youth; when, moreover, theſe Chriſtianized philoſophers made it their buſineſs to demonſtrate in the ſchools the vanity of the Greek philoſophy, and propounded therein a new ſpecies of philoſophic diſcipline, which intimately embraced the principles of Chriſtianity, and accommodated itſelf to the form of that religion which they had eſpouſed; and when, laſtly, theſe ſame illuſtrious converts to Chriſtianity made a point of expoſing to the world the ſecret vices, the contentious ſquabbles, and the actual knavery of the pagan philoſophic ſects, the heathen philoſophers perceived at once the peril of their ſituation, and that their credit with the world, as well as every thing elſe that could be dear to them, was brought into the greateſt jeopardy. They therefore united with the prieſthood and the populace in clamouring for the extermination of the Chriſtians, and whilſt they endeavoured, by the propagation of falſe accuſations and calumnies, not only orally, but in their writings, to draw down deſtruction on the Chriſtians at large, were particularly aſſiduous in directing the public vengeance againſt their apoſtate brethren who had gone over to the new religion. It was not, therefore, ſo much with a view to uphold what they conſidered to be the cauſe of truth, as to ſupport their own tottering reputation, authority, and glory, and to ſecure to themſelves the common neceſſaries of life, ſuch as food and raiment, motives in fact of much the ſame kind with thoſe which had previouſly excited the hoſtility of the prieſthood, that theſe philoſophers were induced to take the field againſt the Chriſtians. This war of the philoſophers againſt Chriſtianity had its commencement under the reign of the emperor Marcus, who was himſelf a philoſopher, and made it his ſtudy to encourage and gratify philoſophers: neither had any of the Greek and Roman philoſophers, previouſly

to

their works nor their names have come down to our times. CENT. II.

XX. Amidſt theſe viciſſitudes of fortune, the Chriſtians applied themſelves every where with an ardent and holy zeal to add to the ſtrength and ſtability of their cauſe, and at the ſame time to improve it as much as poſſible by means of ſalutary laws and regulations. Over each of the larger churches, and ſuch as were eſtabliſhed in cities or towns of any note, there preſided a teacher who bore the title of Biſhop, and whoſe appointment to this office reſted entirely with the people. The biſhop was aſſiſted by a council of preſbyters or elders, who, in like manner, depended for their appointment on popular ſuffrage, and, availing himſelf of the aid thus furniſhed him, it was, in an eſpecial Government of the church.

to this period, embraced Chriſtianity, nor had the Chriſtians applied themſelves to the cultivation of philoſophy; indeed it was a thing which they were expreſsly enjoined by St. Paul to avoid. From what we have here obſerved, it is eaſily to be perceived, by any one who will exert his reaſon, whether there be not an apparently good foundation for the conjecture which we have above hazarded, that the philoſophers were in fact the authors of the ſufferings to which the Chriſtians were expoſed in the time of the emperor Marcus. At this period the jealouſy of the philoſophers became awakened, and a fear was excited in their breaſts leſt they ſhould be deſpoiled of their renown, and reduced, as it were, to beggary, in conſequence of the diſcloſures made by thoſe of their brethren who had turned Chriſtians. Being therefore able to carry every point with the emperor, and Marcus himſelf no doubt feeling hurt and indignant at the contempt and deriſion with which philoſophy, conſidered by him as the chief good, was treated by the Chriſtians, they found no difficulty in prevailing on him to put theſe people without the pale of his juſtice, and to permit them, in return for the inſults they had offered to the honour and dignity of philoſophy, to be aſſailed with every ſpecies of cruelty, and even deprived of their lives.

degree,

CENT. II.

Government of the church.

degree, his duty to be ever vigilant and active in preventing the intereſts of religion from experiencing any detriment. To the biſhop likewiſe it belonged to allot to each of the preſbyters his proper functions and department; and to ſee that, in every thing appertaining to religion and divine worſhip, a due reſpect was had to the laws and regulations which the people had enacted or otherwiſe ſanctioned with their approbation. The deacons and deaconeſſes filled ſubordinate ſtations in the church, and had various duties aſſigned to them according as circumſtances might require.

The daughter churches, or leſſer Chriſtian aſſemblies, that through the care and exertions of the biſhop had been eſtabliſhed in the neighbouring diſtricts and villages, were governed by preſbyters ſent from the mother church, who, in conſequence of their repreſenting the perſon, and exerciſing, with a few exceptions, all the rights and functions of the biſhop by whom they were commiſſioned, came to be diſtinguiſhed by the title of *Chorepiſcopi*, or rural biſhops. The ſupreme power in theſe equal aſſemblies or congregations reſided in the people; and conſequently no alteration of importance, nor, in fact, any thing of more than ordinary moment, could be brought about or carried into effect without having recourſe to a general aſſembly, by the ſuffrages and authority of which alone could the opinions and counſels of the biſhop and the preſbyters be rendered obligatory, and acquire the force of laws.

Authority of the apoſtolic churches.

XXI. The moſt perfect equality prevailed amongſt all the churches in point of rights and power, each of them preſcribing to itſelf

ſelf at any time according to its own will and judgment ſuch laws and regulations as its circumſtances appeared to demand: nor does this age ſupply us with a ſingle inſtance of any church aſſuming to itſelf any thing like a right of dominion or command over the others [y]. An ancient cuſtom, however, obtained of attributing to thoſe churches which had been founded by the apoſtles themſelves a ſuperior degree of honour and a more exalted dignity; on which account it was, for the moſt part, uſual, when any diſpute aroſe reſpecting principles or tenets, for the opinion of theſe churches to be aſked; as alſo, for thoſe who entered into a diſcuſſion of any matters connected with religion, to refer, in ſupport of their poſitions, to the voice of the apoſtolic churches [z]. We may, therefore, hence very readily perceive the reaſon which, in

CENT. II.

Authority of the apoſtolic churches.

[y] What was done by Victor during the controverſy reſpecting the time of Eaſter by no means proves, as we ſhall preſently ſhew, that he arrogated to himſelf the power of making laws.

[z] If the reader will turn to Irenæus *adverſ. Hæreſ.* lib. iii. cap. iii. p. 175. ed. Maſſuet. and Tertullian *de Præſcript. adverſ. Hæreticos*, cap. xxxvi. p. 245. ed. Rigalt. he will find two very notable paſſages, in which theſe illuſtrious writers, in their diſpute with the Gnoſtics, make their appeal to the apoſtolic churches. Between theſe paſſages there is ſuch an accordance and ſimilitude, that I can ſcarcely doubt but that Tertullian, at the time of his writing, had Irenæus, (whom he had certainly read, as appears from his book, *contra Valentinianos*, cap. v.) before his eyes, and intentionally imitated him. The Gnoſtics finding themſelves hardly preſſed by the authority of the ſacred writings, endeavoured to maintain their ground by aſſerting that the true and genuine doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt was not to be learnt from the writings of the apoſtles, for that it had never been committed to writing, but that the apoſtles had

CENT. II.

in cases of doubt and controversy, caused the Christians of the west to have recourse to the church

Authority of the apostolic churches.

had transmitted it merely by word of mouth. Their having recourse to such a miserable shift indicated plainly enough that their cause was wholly desperate: in fact, they could adduce nothing whatever, in support of this ridiculous assertion; and their opponents might therefore have contented themselves with calling upon them, as they certainly, with the greatest propriety might have done, to prove what they thus alleged. Tertullian and Irenæus, however, adopted a different mode of depriving them of this subterfuge, and exposing to the world its utter falsity, namely, that of appealing to the apostolic churches. Their train of argument is this:—If it were true that the apostles had orally transmitted a doctrine different from that which they committed to writing, there can be no doubt but that such doctrine would have been communicated to those churches which they themselves founded, ordained, and instructed. But it is notoriously the fact, that of all the churches which owe their foundation and institution to the apostles, and in which we know that it has been an object of main concern with their bishops most religiously to preserve and adhere to that form of discipline which they received from their founders, there is not a single one that gives the least countenance to the fables and idle dreams of the Gnostics. We maintain, therefore, that these latter are altogether unworthy of belief when they assert, that their tenets are of an apostolic origin, being derived from the apostles through oral communication. To this reasoning the Gnostics could reply in no other way than by saying, that the churches established by the apostles had gradually departed from the maxims and tenets of their founders, and that their primitive bishops had been forcibly supplanted by others who knew nothing of the genuine apostolical discipline. Foreseeing then, that such, if any, must be their answer, Irenæus takes care to shew that in the Roman church, which, for the sake of brevity, he takes as a fair example of the whole, the series of bishops had been continued down without interruption from the time of the apostles, and the regular succession of them been never disturbed or sullied by the intervention of any stranger or person whose principles were in any respect different from those of the apostles. From this one observation we gain considerable light as to this mode of arguing, and need no other proof of

church of Rome, thoſe of Africa to that of Alexandria, and thoſe of Aſia to that of Antioch,

CENT. II.

Authority of the apoſtolic churches.

of the very great error into which thoſe of the preſent day fall who take their ſtand behind tradition and apoſtolical ſucceſſion, and contend that they are juſtified in doing ſo by the example of the primitive Chriſtian teachers. Both Irenæus and Tertullian moſt obviouſly agree in this, that they place all the apoſtolic churches on a preciſely equal footing, and allow to each of them the ſame weight and authority in determining this controverſy with the Gnoſtics. Tertullian is particularly explicit as to this. His words are;—*Percurre eccleſias apoſtolicas, apud quas ipſæ adhuc cathedræ apoſtolorum ſuis locis præſident. - - - Proxima eſt tibi Achaia; habes Corinthum. Si non longe abes a Macedonia, habes Philippos, habes Theſſalonicences. Si potes in Aſiam tendere, habes Epheſum. Si autem Italiæ adjaces, habes Romam, unde nobis quoque auctoritas præſto eſt.* Tertullian, it is manifeſt, makes no diſtinction between theſe apoſtolic churches: the ſame authority, and the ſame dignity is attributed by him to all of them: the church of Rome was, in his eſtimation, poſſeſſed of no greater conſequence, nor had it any more power to determine the diſpute with the Gnoſtics, than that of Epheſus, Theſſalonica, or Corinth. The Roman church is indeed conſidered by him as having been more fortunate, inaſmuch as it had been bleſſed with the preſence of Peter, Paul, and John, who poured out their blood in the cauſe of Chriſt: *Iſta quam felix eccleſia! cui totam doctrinam apoſtoli cum ſanguine ſuo profuderunt; ubi Petrus paſſioni dominicæ adæquatur; ubi Paulus Joannis exitu coronatur; ubi apoſtolus Johannes poſteaquam in oleum igneum demerſus nihil paſſus eſt, in inſulam relegatur.* But ſo far from giving countenance to the idea of a greater power with regard to determining controverſies reſpecting religion being poſſeſſed by the church of Rome than by that of Epheſus or any other apoſtolical church, he in effect gives it a direct negative. Irenæus, indeed, extols the church of Rome, not only on account of its good fortune, but alſo for other reaſons of which we ſhall preſently take more notice; but notwithſtanding this, he plainly agrees with Tertullian as to the above point, that the power and authority of all the apoſtolic churches in determining the controverſy that had ariſen between the orthodox Chriſtians and the Gnoſtics, was preciſely equal. *Traditionem*, ſays he, *apoſtolorum in toto mundo manifeſtatam, in omni eccleſia adeſt reſpicere omnibus qui vera velint videre.* ——*Etenim ſi recondita myſteria*

ſciſſent

CENT. II.

tioch for their opinion, and which alſo occaſioned theſe opinions to be, not unfrequently, re-

Authority of the apoſtolic churches.

ſciſſent apoſtoli, quæ ſcorſim et latenter ab reliquis perfectos docebant, his vel maxime traderent ea, quibus etiam ipſas eccleſias committebant. Moſt aſſuredly Irenæus would not have written thus, he would not have ſpoken generally of all the churches that had been founded by the apoſtles, but have confined his reference to that of Rome alone, if either he or any other perſon at that time had believed that the right and power of determining controverſies reſpecting religion was poſſeſſed by the Roman church. It is true, indeed, that he afterwards makes no mention of the other churches, but contents himſelf with oppoſing to the Gnoſtics the ſentiments of the church of Rome alone; but it is plain, that this is not done by him from a perſuaſion, that to this one church alone belonged the deciſion of Chriſtian controverſies, but, as he openly avows, for the ſake of brevity; *ſed quoniam valde longum eſt in hoc tali volumine omnium eccleſiarum enumerare ſucceſſiones, maximæ et antiquiſſimæ eccleſiæ traditionem indicantes, confundimus omnes.* Tertullian and Irenæus agree alſo in this, that they paſs over, without the ſlighteſt notice, that church, which it is natural to regard as the head and mother of all churches, and of which Chriſt himſelf was the parent and founder, I mean the church of Jeruſalem. Tertullian, although he ſpecifically enumerates the more celebrated of the apoſtolic churches, yet ſays not a word of that of Jeruſalem. Irenæus may be conſidered as tacitly treating it with contempt, when he gives to the church of Rome a preference over all the others. But in this they are by no means ſingular, for I do not know that the church of Jeruſalem, although in point of foundation ſuperior to all the reſt, is ever appealed to, or even cited, as an authority, by any of the ancient fathers. This circumſtance however, can occaſion no very great wonder to any one who is appriſed, that the original and true church of Jeruſalem, conſiſting of Jews and the deſcendants of Jews who had actually ſeen and heard our bleſſed Lord himſelf, ſeceded from the remaining church under the reign of Hadrian; and that the church which aſſembled in Hadrian's new city, Ælia Capitolina, and which aſſumed to itſelf the title of the Church of Jeruſalem, was altogether a diſtinct aſſembly from the ancient and original congregation. In theſe reſpects, then, we ſee that Irenæus and Tertullian are in perfect harmony with each other; but in what further relates to the church of Rome we ſhall find them

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regarded in the light of laws, namely, that theſe churches had been planted, reared up and conſiderably at variance. Irenæus extols it on many accounts, and attributes to it a certain ſuperiority or pre-eminence; but Tertullian, although he had read, and in other reſpects follows Irenæus, ſpeaks only of the felicity or good fortune of the Roman church; of its ſuperiority in any other reſpect he appears to know nothing. The reaſon of this difference may, I think, be aſſigned without much difficulty. Irenæus had been at Rome, and he was without doubt, indebted for many kindneſſes to the Roman biſhop, Eleutherus; added to which he was the biſhop of a poor little church which had ſuffered conſiderably in the then recent perſecution under Marcus, and ſtood very much in need of the counſel and aſſiſtance that were to be afforded by the great and opulent church of Rome and its biſhop. To ſpeak in plain terms, he was no ſtranger to the advantages that were to be derived from the wealth and beneficence of the church of Rome, and he therefore made no ſcruple of flattering her pretenſions as to a point on the accompliſhment of which he knew that ſhe was bent, namely, that of exalting herſelf to a ſuperiority over the other Chriſtian churches. But Tertullian was an African, and it is well known that the African church was, long after the times of which we are treating, impatient of the Roman domination, and a moſt ſtrenuous aſſerter of the primitive Chriſtian liberty. Therefore, although he was indebted for a conſiderable part of what is urged in argument by him againſt the Gnoſtics to Irenæus, as muſt be manifeſt to any one upon collation, he yet adopts none of the compliments that are paid by this latter writer to the Roman church; nor does he aſſign to it any pre-eminence over the other churches, except in that ſuperior degree of felicity which it derived from the glorious death of the apoſtles Peter and Paul, and the miraculous preſervation of the apoſtle John. But let us now ſee, ſince we have thus entered into the ſubject, in what conſiſts that celebrated eulogium of Irenæus on the Roman church which Ren. Maſſuetus pronounces to be a grievous ſtumbling block to all who have quitted the church of Rome and ſhaken off the yoke of the catholic faith; which the friends of the papacy conſider as the very citadel of that pre-eminence which the church of Rome arrogates to itſelf over every other church; and in explaining and commenting on which

Authority of the apoſtolic churches.

CENT. II. and regulated either by the hand or under the im-

Authority of the apoſtolic churches.

ſo many great and excellent men have beſtowed no little portion of labour. With the remarks of others on the ſubject, whether well or ill-founded, I ſhall not concern myſelf, but merely ſtate, in as few words as poſſible, what, upon an impartial view of the matter, appears to me to be the truth. After ſtating that in his oppoſition to the Gnoſtics he ſhould not adduce individually the authority and diſcipline of all the apoſtolical churches, but, for the ſake of brevity, content himſelf with referring to the church of Rome, as exhibiting a fair example of the whole; Irenæus thus proceeds; *ad hanc enim eccleſiam* (the church of Rome) *propter potiorem principalitatem neceſſe eſt omnem convenire eccleſiam, hoc eſt, eos, qui ſunt undique fideles, in qua ſemper ab his, qui ſunt undique, conſervata eſt ea, quæ eſt ab apoſtolis traditio.* Theſe, then, are the words which have given riſe to ſuch ſubtile and laborious diſquiſitions. But let them be twiſted in any manner whatever, I have not the leaſt heſitation in declaring, it to be my decided opinion, that if the right which the church of Rome, at this day, aſſerts of dictating to the other Chriſtian churches, be founded chiefly on this paſſage, it ſtands but on a very weak and tottering foundation indeed. But leſt my judgment ſhould appear to have been haſtily formed, let it only be conſidered in a general way. (I.) That the ſenſe in which the words of Irenæus are to be underſtood is altogether obſcure, and that through either ignorance or want of ſkill in the Latin tranſlator, it is impoſſible to comprehend, with any degree of preciſion, the meaning intended to be conveyed by certain terms, on the right underſtanding of which the intelligibility of the whole paſſage very materially depends. What, for inſtance, I would aſk, are we to underſtand by *potior principalitas?* What meaning, again are we to annex to the expreſſion *convenire ad eccleſiam Romanam?* In vain will it be for us to pretend to aſcertain the ſenſe of this paſſage until the original Greek of Irenæus be recovered. (II.) That Irenæus is ſpeaking of the church of Rome in the ſecond century, a period at which it might, no doubt, with juſtice be aſſerted that all its biſhops and teachers had continued ſteadfaſt in the obſervance of that diſcipline which had been tranſmitted to them by the apoſtles Peter and Paul. To apply, therefore, what he then ſays, to the church of Rome in its preſent ſtate, is to do much the ſame thing as if, in proof of the

rights

immediate ſuperintendance and care of ſome one or more of the apoſtles themſelves.

CENT. II.

XXII. Although

Authority of the apoſtolic churches.

rights and power that belong to the emperors of Germany, who alſo bear the title of Roman emperors, we were to adduce the rights and powers that were exerciſed by the firſt emperors of the Auguſtan race, Octavius Auguſtus, Tiberius, Caligula, and Claudius. Without doubt, we ſhould account it a very ingenious piece of pleaſantry in any man to quote what Suetonius or Tacitus may have ſaid reſpecting the authority of Auguſtus or Tiberius by way of ſhewing what is due from the German princes to their preſent emperor. By the ſame arguments, then, as a juriſt would make uſe of in refuting ſuch a man may an effectual anſwer be given to thoſe who, from a paſſage in Irenæus, pretend to aſcertain what are at preſent the rights and power of the Roman pontiff. (III.) That this is the teſtimony of a private individual, of one that was nothing more than the biſhop of a ſmall inſignificant church that had been but a few years before eſtabliſhed in Gaul, of a man moreover who in his writings has given, not a few proofs of a judgment far from ſound or correct, as well as of a mind evidently labouring under the ſhackles of prejudice. But who is there, poſſeſſed of but merely common ſenſe and information, that would recogniſe in the *dicta* or precepts of any private individual, and more eſpecially in thoſe of an individual who had betrayed no ſmall deficiency of judgment, and been convicted of having fallen into more than one palpable error, a ſtandard whereby to aſcertain and demonſtrate the public rights of ſtates or churches? Should there, however, be found a man ſo diſpoſed, we can meet Irenæus with an authority not at all inferior to himſelf either in point of judgment or of talents, namely Tertullian, who denies that the church of Rome poſſeſſed any pre-eminence over the reſt of the churches, except it were in point of felicity or good fortune. What, therefore, the ſupporters of the church of Rome take upon them in this inſtance to maintain upon the authority of Irenæus, we ſhall aſſume to ourſelves the liberty of denying upon the authority of Tertullian. Having, then, premiſed thus much in a general way, let us now direct our attention more particularly to the words of Irenæus. *Neceſſe eſt*, he tells us, *omnem eccleſiam convenire ad eccleſiam Romanam;* and for this he aſſigns two reaſons; the firſt, *propter potiorem principalitatem;* the ſecond, *quia ſemper in ea conſer-*

CENT. II.

XXII. Although, therefore, all the churches had, at the commencement of this century, various

Civil unity introduced amongſt the Chriſtians.

vata eſt apoſtolorum traditio. Now it unluckily happens that the terms in which this precept is conveyed are ſuch as to leave its meaning ſomewhat dubious. By the words *convenire ad eccleſiam Romanam*, it ſhould ſeem moſt likely that we ought to underſtand *accedere ad Romanam eccleſiam*, or *conſulere eccleſiam Romanam*, and that what Irenæus meant to ſay was this;—that it behoved all Chriſtians, in matters of doubt, connected with religion, to reſort for advice and direction to the church of Rome, (*i.e.* the church of Rome in its then ſtate,) inaſmuch as it was the moſt ancient and the largeſt of all the churches of the weſt, and owed its foundation to the hand of the apoſtles themſelves. But if ſuch be this father's meaning, and the reaſons which he ſubjoins ſcarcely allow us to doubt of its being ſo, there is certainly nothing in it that can afford the church of Rome much ſupport in the preſent day. It is not within the power, even of the moſt ſubtile diſputant, to make it appear that Irenæus meant that his words ſhould be applied to the church of Rome in all ſubſequent ages and times. On the contrary we have, in the latter reaſon which he aſſigns for his precept, a convincing proof that he ſpoke in relation only to the more ancient and early church of Rome as it exiſted in his own time. The reaſon that he aſſigns why the other churches ſhould have recourſe to that of Rome is, *quia in ea traditio apoſtolorum conſervata eſt.* Now nothing can be more plain than that he here ſpeaks merely of time paſt. Had he meant that the church of Rome was to be conſulted and made the arbitreſs in all ages to come, he unqueſtionably would have written, *in qua traditio apoſtolorum conſervata eſt, et ſemper conſervabitur.* As to the firſt reaſon given by Irenæus, namely, *propter potiorem principalitatem*, it is altogether involved in obſcurity and doubt. For *principalitas* is ſuch an ambiguous word, and admits of being uſed in ſuch a variety of ſenſes, that, owing to the negligence of Irenæus, or his Latin tranſlator, in not more particularly indicating what he meant by it, a degree of darkneſs, not eaſy to be diſpelled, is thrown over the whole of this ſentence. The conjecture that ſtrikes me as the moſt plauſible in regard to it is, that by the word *principalitas* Irenæus might mean thoſe four honourable diſtinctions appertaining to the church of Rome which he had juſt before enumerated, namely, magnitude, antiquity, celebrity,

various laws and inſtitutions in common, which had been received from the apoſtles themſelves, and were particularly careful in maintaining with each other a certain community of tenets, morals, and charity; yet each individual church which had a biſhop and preſbyters of its own, aſſumed to itſelf the form and rights of a little diſtinct republic or commonwealth; and with regard to its internal concerns was wholly regulated by a code of laws, that, if they did not originate with, had, at leaſt, received the ſanction of the people conſtituting ſuch church. This primitive liberty and independence, however, was by degrees relinquiſhed, and it became the practice for all the minor churches within a province to form themſelves into one large aſſociation, and to hold at ſtated ſeaſons, much after the manner of confederate republics, a convention, in which the common intereſts and welfare of the whole were taken into

CENT. II.

Civil unity introduced amongſt the Chriſtians.

lebrity, and apoſtolical origin. *Maximæ*, ſays he, *et antiquiſſimæ, et omnibus cognitæ, a glorioſiſſimis duobus apoſtolis, Petro et Paulo, fundatæ et conſtitutæ eccleſiæ.* In theſe, probably, conſiſted that *potior principalitas* which Irenæus attributes to the church of Rome; he never dreamt of aſcertaining what would be its claims to pre-eminence in every future age. At leaſt this explication of his words poſſeſſes a force and ſimplicity that I believe we ſhall in vain look for in any other. But it is time for me to put an end to this note, though materials are not wanting for extending it to a much greater length. I will therefore only add, that I cannot help viewing it as a thing particularly unbecoming in men of learning and talents, to pretend to ſay that the public rights of the univerſal church, and the form of government preſcribed for it by Chriſt, are to be elicited from the obſcure and uncertain words of a private individual, the biſhop of merely a poor little inſignificant church, a good and pious man unqueſtionably, but one, at the ſame time, whoſe mental qualifications and endowments were certainly nothing more than of the middling order.

CENT. II.

Civil unity introduced amongſt the Chriſtians.

conſideration and provided for. Of the immediate authors of this arrangement we are uninformed, but it is certain that it had its origin in Greece; and there are many things which combine to prove, that during this century it did not extend itſelf beyond the confines of Aſia. In proceſs of time, however, the very great advantages attending on a federation of this ſort becoming apparent, other provinces were induced to follow the example of Greece, and by degrees this form of government became general throughout the whole church; ſo that the Chriſtian community may be ſaid, thenceforward, to have reſembled one large commonwealth made up, like thoſe of Holland and Switzerland, of many minor republics. Theſe conventions or aſſemblies, in which the delegates from various aſſociated churches conſulted on what was requiſite to be done for the common welfare of the whole, were termed *ſynods* by the Greeks, and by the Latins *councils*. To the laws enacted by theſe deputies under the powers with which they were inveſted by their reſpective churches, the Greeks gave the name of *canons* or general rules, and by this title it alſo became uſual for them to be diſtinguiſhed by the Latins [*a*].

XXIII. The

[*a*] The reader will find what I have here ſtated very forcibly illuſtrated and confirmed by Tertullian in a very notable paſſage that occurs in his book *de Jejuniis*, cap. xiii p. 711. opp. edit. Rigalt. Tertullian is advocating the cauſe of the Montaniſts, whoſe tenets he had eſpouſed, and to whom the orthodox Chriſtians attributed it as a fault that they had taken upon them to inſtitute certain faſts or ſeaſons of abſtinence. The reaſon aſſigned by the regular Chriſtians for objecting to the rules reſpecting faſts preſcribed by the Montaniſts, was deduced from the nature of

XXIII. The aſſociations, however, thus introduced amongſt the churches, and the councils to

CENT. II.

Effects produced by the introduction of this civil unity.

divine worſhip. God, ſaid they, ought to be honoured and worſhipped by the Chriſtians of their own free will, not from compulſion, or by the command of another. *Denique reſpondetis hæc ex arbitrio agenda, non ex imperio.* In this age, therefore, the nature and character of the true religion continued to be well underſtood by the generality of Chriſtians, inaſmuch as they denied it to be ſubject to the controul of any human laws. To this argument Tertullian replies, in the firſt place, that the Montaniſts, in obſerving certain faſts, did not conform themſelves to the ordinances of men but to God, or the Paraclete, *i. e.* the Holy Spirit, who had enjoined thoſe faſts by the mouths of his ſervants. *Plus humanæ licebit voluntati quam divinæ poteſtati? Ego me ſeculo, non Deo liberum memini; ſic meum eſt ultro officium facere Domino, ſicut indicere illius eſt.* He agrees, therefore, with the reſt of the Chriſtians that religion is not to be controuled by human laws, and ſtrenuouſly advocates the cauſe of liberty: but at the ſame time he inſiſts on it that obedience is to be paid to the commands of God, as delivered by certain of his ſervants. To this the Antimontaniſt Chriſtians readily yielded their aſſent. The only thing, therefore, that remained in diſpute between them and Tertullian was, whether Montanus and his followers were really, as they aſſerted, inſpired by the Holy Spirit, or not? With regard to this he replies, in the ſecond place, that amongſt the Antimontaniſt Chriſtians the biſhops had the power of enjoining faſts, as alſo, in caſes of great emergency, of impoſing extraordinary contributions on the people. *Bene autem quod et epiſcopi univerſæ plebi mandare jejunia aſſolent: non dico de induſtria ſtipium conferendarum, ut veſtræ capturæ eſt: ſed interdum et ex aliqua ſollicitudinis eccleſiaſticæ cauſa.* Theſe words are of the very firſt importance and authority in enabling us to aſcertain the extent to which the power poſſeſſed by the biſhops of the primitive church reached. Had it been poſſible for the biſhops of this period of their own accord, *i. e.* without the aſſent of the people, to do more than what is here ſtated, Tertullian would, moſt aſſuredly, not have failed to notice it on this occaſion, when his attention was particularly directed to the rights and power which might lawfully be exerciſed by men over the flock of Chriſt. It appears, therefore, that with regard to two things

CENT. II.

to which they gave riſe, although not unattended with certain benefits and advantages, were, nevertheleſs

Effects produced by the introduction of this civil unity.

the biſhop's ſole mandate alone was ſufficient. In the firſt place, he might enjoin faſts; for ſince every thing relating to the ſervice of God was placed immediately under the care and direction of the biſhop, and faſts were conſidered as conſtituting a part of ſuch ſervice, it was but juſt that the times for obſerving them ſhould be left to his appointment. The biſhop, it ſeems, could alſo, in any caſe of emergency, that called for pecuniary aid, and ſuch caſes were by no means uncommon, require of the people to make ſuch an additional contribution, according to their means, as might enable him to meet ſuch exigency. Concerning the biſhop's power as to this, Tertullian ſpeaks in his uſual unpoliſhed, obſcure, and laconic manner; and it may, therefore, not be amiſs to offer the reader ſome explanation of what he ſays on this head. It is manifeſt then, that under the title of *ſtipes* he refers to thoſe contributions which the Chriſtians were accuſtomed to make in conſequence of an admonition from the biſhop. Theſe contributions he divides into ordinary and extraordinary. The words, *ut veſtræ capturæ eſt*, relate to thoſe of the ordinary kind. *Captura* has here the meaning of *reditus* (income, ability, gains). The cuſtom was for every Chriſtian ordinarily to contribute towards the common ſtock in a certain degree, proportionate to his means or ability. In addition to theſe ordinary offerings, we find a diſtinct mention made of certain extraordinary ones, which were called for in caſes of emergency. Extraordinary expences were not unfrequently incurred by churches in the entertainment of ſtrangers, in relieving the ſick, and thoſe of the brethren who were languiſhing in captivity, and in various other ways, to the defrayment of which the free and voluntary oblations, as they were termed, of the Chriſtians were occaſionally found unequal. The exigencies here ſpoken of are in part particularized by Tertullian himſelf *in Apologet.* cap. xxxix. p. 325. *Diſpenſatur*, ſays he, *naufragiis, et ſi qui in metallis, et ſi qui in inſulis, vel in cuſtodiis duntaxat ex cauſa Dei ſectæ alumni confeſſionis ſuæ fiunt.* Whenever a caſe of this nature occurred, the biſhop addreſſed his flock, requiring every one to contribute, not only according to his means, but in a degree proportionate to the magnitude and preſſure of the occaſion, ſo that the neceſſity of the church might be fully anſwered;

theleſs, productive of ſo great an alteration in the general ſtate of the church, as nearly to effect

CENT. II.

Effects produced by the introduction of this civil unity.

and to this mandate it was cuſtomary for all to pay obedience with the utmoſt alacrity. The meaning, therefore, of Tertullian's words is this: "I will not ſpeak of the very great readineſs of the Chriſtians in making the ordinary contributions required of them by the biſhop; for I know that no one as to this acts from compulſion, but each perſon gives according to what his ability or circumſtances permit. But, not unfrequently, unlooked-for accidents and emergencies occur, which demand pecuniary relief to a certain extent, and require that the ratio of contribution ſhould be determined by the biſhop: nor does any Chriſtian, in ſuch caſes, ever heſitate in paying obedience to his commands." In the third place, Tertullian replies, that it was cuſtomary in Greece for councils of the churches to be convened, and that therein laws were enacted and duties impoſed, to which, notwithſtanding that they were purely of human origin, no exception was ever taken. *Aguntur præterea per Græcias illa certis in locis concilia ex univerſis eccleſiis, per quæ et altiora quæque in commune tractantur, et ipſa repræſentatio totius nominis Chriſtiani magna veneratione celebratur.* From theſe words it appears, (1ſt,) That at the cloſe of the ſecond century the practice of convening councils had not been adopted either in Africa, the country where Tertullian lived, or in the Latin Church, or in the Eaſt, or in Egypt, but ſolely in Greece, or, as Tertullian expreſſes it, *per Græcias, i. e.* the nations both in Europe and Aſia that bore the name of Greeks. (2ndly,) That theſe councils were in his time regarded as of mere human origin, not as having been inſtituted either by Chriſt himſelf or his apoſtles. For what he had in view was to prove that good and pious men might enjoin faſts, and preſcribe other ſalutary regulations to the church of Chriſt. Since, therefore, in ſupport of his argument, he adduces the acts of theſe councils, it is plain that he muſt have conſidered them as aſſemblies which owed their origin to mere human authority, and their acts, not in the light of oracles or dictates of the Holy Spirit, as they came to be regarded in after times, but as mere human laws and regulations. (3dly,) That even in Tertullian's time, certain places or cities had been fixed on for the aſſembling of theſe Greek councils, and that no power exiſted of convening them elſewhere. (4thly,) That theſe councils did not buſy

CENT. II.

effect the entire ſubverſion of its ancient conſtitution. For, in the firſt place, the primitive rights

Effects produced by the introduction of this civil unity.

themſelves about things of inferior moment, each individual church being left to determine on ſuch matters for itſelf, but employed themſelves in the diſcuſſion and arrangement of points of a higher and weightier nature, or ſuch as were of general intereſt and importance. (5thly,) That the biſhops, who were preſent at theſe councils, were merely the repreſentatives of their reſpective churches; that is, that they neither aſſented to, nor originated any thing therein in their private individual capacity, but always in the names of the churches of which they were reſpectively the delegates. *Repræſentatio*, ſays Tertullian, *totius nominis Chriſtiani celebratur*. Now *totum nomen Chriſtianum* evidently, in this place, means, *tota eccleſia*, the whole church bearing the name of Chriſt. The biſhops, therefore, were conſidered as repreſenting, collectively, the entire aſſociated Chriſtian flock, and, individually, the different churches over which they reſpectively preſided; and hence aroſe the veneration in which theſe councils were held. The opinion, that the biſhops, aſſembled in council, officiated in the place of Chriſt himſelf, and that the very nature of their function conſtituted them both legiſlators and judges of the Chriſtian community, had not at this time even ſuggeſted itſelf. Tertullian eſteemed theſe councils worthy of the higheſt commendation, for he thus proceeds: *Et hoc quam dignum fide auſpicante congregari undique ad Chriſtum? Vide quam bonum et quam jucundum habitare fratres in unum.* He moreover adds, what is well worthy of remark, that the biſhops were accuſtomed, before they commenced their deliberations, to petition for divine aid and aſſiſtance by prayer and faſting: *Conventus autem illi ſtationibus prius et jejunationibus operati, dolere cum dolentibus et ita demum congaudere gaudentibus norunt.* It appears, therefore, that eccleſiaſtical councils had their origin amongſt the Greeks in the ſecond century, and that their utility becoming manifeſt, they were gradually adopted by the church at large. The information thus afforded by Tertullian, with reſpect to the origin of councils, is ſupported by the general hiſtory of Chriſtian affairs; for no notice whatever occurs of any eccleſiaſtical councils held prior to the ſecond century; and with regard to thoſe holden in the courſe of that age, the few memorials of them that have reached us very plainly indicate them to have been for the moſt part held

in

rights of the people, in conſequence of this new arrangement of things, experienced a conſiderable diminution, in Greece. Towards the cloſe of this century the practice of holding councils of this kind paſſed from Greece into Paleſtine and Syria, as appears from Euſebius, *Hiſtor. Eccleſ.* lib. v. cap. xxiii. p. 190, 191, where mention is made of councils held about the end of the ſecond century by the biſhops of Paleſtine and the province of Oſdroëna, reſpecting the controverſies then in agitation concerning the proper time for celebrating Eaſter. By certain of the learned it is alſo contended, that on the ſame occaſion a council of the Italian biſhops was convened at Rome by the Roman pontiff Victor. Vid. Pet. Conſtant. *Epiſt. Romanor. Pontificum*, tom. i. in Victore, § 4. p. 94. and others. In proof of this, they quote the following words of Euſebius: καὶ τῶν ἐπὶ Ῥώμης δὲ ὁμοίως ἄλλη περὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ζητήματος, Ἐπίσκοπον Βίκτορα δηλώσα, which are thus rendered by Valeſius, *alia item extat epiſtola ſynodi Romanæ, cui Victoris epiſcopi nomen præfixum eſt.* But not to reſt upon the circumſtance, that no mention is made of any Roman *ſynod* in the Greek original, the name of Victor, biſhop of Rome, being the only one prefixed to this epiſtle, puts it out of all queſtion that it was not the letter of any *ſynod*, but merely of Victor himſelf; for ſynodical epiſtles were uniformly ſubſcribed by all the biſhops preſent. The only conſtruction, therefore, of which theſe words of Euſebius ſeem properly to admit, is this; that Victor having, as was then the cuſtomary practice, conſulted with the Roman preſbyters, addreſſed, with their conſent, this letter, in his own name, to the church over which he preſided; which thing of itſelf furniſhes us with an argument, that the practice of many churches aſſembling together in council, had not at that time paſſed from Greece into Italy. And perhaps it may not be amiſs to notice it by the bye, that Valeſius has fallen into ſome other miſtakes with regard to the account given by Euſebius of the controverſy reſpecting Eaſter, in conſequence of his eſtimating the ſtate of the church in the ſecond century from its condition in after ages. But I have not yet pointed out all that is deſerving of notice with regard to this paſſage of Tertullian. Amongſt other things, it is particularly worthy of remark, that he ſpeaks therein of councils as having had their origin in Greece. Indeed, in no province could it have been more natural for this practice of holding councils to have ariſen than in Greece,

Effects produced by the introduction of this civil unity.

CENT. II.

diminution, inaſmuch as, thenceforward, none but affairs of comparatively very trifling conſequence

Effects produced by the introduction of this civil unity.

Greece. Under a monarchical government, ſuch as that of emperors and kings, the idea of holding councils would probably never have entered into the minds of the Chriſtians; but in ſuch a province as Greece was, the notion might readily enough ſuggeſt itſelf. The Greeks were, as we all know, divided into many minor ſtates and republics. Amongſt theſe petty governments an intimate aſſociation for general purpoſes ſubſiſted; and for many ages prior to the coming of Chriſt it had been uſual for them to hold very frequent councils, and to aſſemble, by their delegates or repreſentatives, at certain places, in order to deliberate and reſolve on what might beſt promote their common intereſts. The moſt celebrated of theſe aſſemblies was their general national council, or that of the Amphictyons, which was held at Delphi at ſtated ſeaſons of the year, in ſpring and autumn, and to which were referred all controverſies of any conſiderable weight or moment that might have ariſen between any of the confederated ſtates. Vid. *Ubbonis Emmii Græcia vetus*, tom. iii. p. 340, et ſeq. *Nouveau Dictionaire Hiſt. Crit.* par Chaufepied, tom. i. voce *Amphictyones*. Theſe councils were not altogether diſcontinued even after Greece had been reduced into a province by the Romans. The great council of the Amphictyons, in particular, continued, with the conſent of the emperors, to hold its meetings, even down to the time when Tertullian wrote, as may be ſeen in Pauſanias. In a province ſo much accuſtomed to councils, it is no wonder that the Chriſtians ſhould hit upon the thought, that it might redound to the welfare of the church if, after the example of the Greek ſtates, and particularly of the Amphictyons, aſſemblies or councils of aſſociated Chriſtians were to meet at certain ſtated ſeaſons, and deliberate reſpecting their common intereſts. Light is hence thrown on canon xxxth of thoſe bearing the title "Apoſtolical," and which are commonly attributed to Clement of Rome, as well as on the fifth of the Nicene ones, by both of which the biſhops are enjoined to aſſemble in council twice in the year, namely, in the ſpring and fall. Theſe were the identical times at which, as we have above ſtated, it was uſual, even ſo low down as the ſecond century, for the Amphictyons to hold their meetings; and hence I think it is evident, that it was the peculiar conſtitution and habits of

quence were ever made the ſubject of popular deliberation and adjuſtment; the councils of the aſſociated churches aſſuming to themſelves the right of diſcuſſing and regulating every thing of moment or importance, as well as of determining all queſtions to which any ſort of weight was attached. Whence aroſe two ſorts of eccleſiaſtical law, the one public or general, and thenceforward termed "Canonical," from the canons; the other private or peculiar, conſiſting merely of ſuch regulations as each individual church deemed it expedient, after the ancient manner, to enact for itſelf. In the next place, the dignity and authority of the biſhops were very materially augmented and enlarged. In the infancy, indeed, of councils, the biſhops did not ſcruple to acknowledge that they appeared there merely as the miniſters or legates of their reſpective churches, and that they were, in fact, nothing more than repreſentatives acting from inſtructions: but it was not long before this humble language began, by little and little, to be exchanged for a loftier tone; and they at length took upon them to aſſert that they were the legitimate ſucceſſors of the apoſtles themſelves, and might conſequently, of their own proper authority, dictate laws to the Chriſtian flock. To what an extent the inconveniences and evils ariſing out of theſe prepoſterous pretenſions

CENT. II.

Effects produced by the introduction of this civil unity.

of their country which led the Greek Chriſtians to think of eſtabliſhing eccleſiaſtical councils; and that, in conſtituting aſſemblies of this kind, they merely availed themſelves, in the cauſe of religion, of a meaſure that had long been conſidered as productive of very eſſential advantages in the ſtate. With regard to the different points thus touched upon, I can perceive a very wide field for diſcuſſion lying open before me; but on the preſent occaſion I am compelled to be ſtudious of brevity.

reached

CENT. II.

Effects produced by the introduction of this civil unity.

reached in after times, is too well known to require any particular notice in this place. Another effect which theſe councils had, was to break in upon and gradually deſtroy that abſolute and perfect equality which had reigned amongſt the biſhops in the primitive times. For as it was neceſſary that ſome certain place ſhould be fixed on for the ſeat of council, and that the right of convening the aſſembly and preſiding therein as moderator, as well as of collecting the ſuffrages, and preſerving the records of its acts, ſhould be veſted in ſome one or other of its members, it for the moſt part became cuſtomary to give a preference in theſe reſpects to the chief city of the province and its biſhop, and hence, in proceſs of time, ſprung up the dignity and authority of "metropolitans," a title conferred by way of diſtinction on the biſhops of principal cities. Theſe aſſociations of churches, ſituated within one and the ſame province, ſoon gave riſe to the practice of many different provinces aſſociating together; and hence a ſtill greater diſparity, by degrees, introduced itſelf amongſt the biſhops. In fine, this cuſtom of holding councils becoming at length univerſally prevalent, the major part of the church [*b*] aſſumed the form of a large civil commonwealth, made up of numerous inferior

[*b*] I purpoſely expreſs myſelf after this manner, ſince it can be made appear, from unqueſtionable authority, that in every part of the then known world there were certain churches, and thoſe too of conſiderable magnitude and conſequence, (for inſtance, the African church properly ſo called, in Africa, the Chaldaic and Perſic in Aſia, and that of Britain in Europe, to paſs over others that might be mentioned), which, although they adopted the practice of holding councils, and did not keep themſelves entirely aloof

ferior republics; to the preſervation of which order of things it being found expedient that a chief or ſuperintending prelate ſhould be appointed for each of the three grand diviſions of the earth; and that, in addition to this, a ſupreme power ſhould be lodged in the hands of ſome one individual biſhop; it was tacitly aſſented to [c] that a certain degree of eccleſiaſtical prè-eminence ſhould be recogniſed as belonging to the biſhops of Antioch, Rome, and Alexandria, the principal cities in Aſia, Europe, and Africa, and that the biſhop of Rome, the nobleſt and moſt opulent city in the world, ſhould moreover take the prece-

CENT. II.

Effects produced by the introduction of this civil unity.

aloof from all aſſociation, yet declined to make a part of that grand Chriſtian confederation which was gradually entered into by the reſt; and were, for a long time, inflexibly tenacious of their own juſt liberty and independence. The churches which thus tacitly declined joining the general aſſociation, and maintained no other community with thoſe principal prelates who were ſtyled patriarchs, than that of religion and charity, of themſelves furniſh us with an effectual argument in refutation of thoſe who aſcribe the origin of this aſſociation to our bleſſed Lord himſelf, and make it to have ſprung from ſome law of his. For had it been the command of our Saviour that his church ſhould take the form of a large commonwealth, moſt aſſuredly no Chriſtian aſſembly would have lain claim to independence, and refuſed to acknowledge the authority of thoſe who were appointed to preſide over the general intereſts of the whole body.

[c] The coucil of Nice, the principal one of thoſe that are termed Œcumenical, by its ſixth canon, which treats of the pre-eminence of the biſhops of Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria, places it out of all queſtion that the dignity and authority of theſe prelates reſted, not on divine right, nor on any thing in the nature of an apoſtolic mandate, but ſolely and entirely on ancient uſage or tacit conſent. Its commencement in Latin is, *Antiqua conſuetudo ſervetur*, in Greek τὰ ἀρχαῖα ἔθη κρατεῖτω. Vid. Lud. Ell. du Pin. *de Antiqua Eccleſiæ Diſciplina*, p. 19, 20.

dence

CENT. II.

Compariſon of the Chriſtian with the Jewiſh prieſthood.

dence amongſt theſe principal biſhops, or, as they were afterwards ſtyled, *patriarchs*, and alſo aſſume the primacy of the whole Chriſtian church throughout the world [*d*].

XXIV. By whatever advantages this new form of eccleſiaſtical government might be attended, they were confined excluſively to paſtors of the higher order, *i. e.* the biſhops who ſat in theſe councils as the repreſentatives of their reſpective churches: but much about the ſame time there aroſe and quickly gained ground in the Chriſtian world, an opinion reſpecting the nature of the functions wherewith the miniſters of the church were inveſted, which tended, in no ſmall degree, to augment the dignity and rights of the whole ſacred body. Whilſt the leaſt probability remained that Jeruſalem might,

[*d*] The extent of the authority and power poſſeſſed in the primitive ages by theſe biſhops, who were thus inveſted with the preſidency of the larger eccleſiaſtical confederations, may, without much difficulty, be eſtimated when it is conſidered that they were raiſed, by tacit conſent, above their brethren, merely upon the principle of ſupplying ſome external link or bond whereby the minor aſſociations, or churches, which were all independent of each other, might be held together. What the different metropolitans were in reſpect of their provinces, that was a patriarch in reſpect of a larger portion of the world. That great thing, therefore, which we term the Hierarchy, and which has, moſt unhappily, been the cauſe of ſo many diſputes and wars amongſt Chriſtians, if it be examined into with impartiality, and traced back to the firſt ages of the church, will be found to have taken its riſe from very ſmall and inconſiderable beginnings, in fact to have originally ſprung from nothing more than the plan adopted by the Greek churches of moulding their eccleſiaſtical eſtabliſhment after the model of their national civil government and councils, and that it was only by degrees that it attained to that degree of conſequence and ſtability which has enabled it in ſubſequent ages to bid defiance to all the efforts of power and art to overthrow it.

at one time or other, again rear its head from the duſt, the Chriſtian teachers and elders aſſumed to themſelves no titles or diſtinctions, at leaſt none but the moſt modeſt and humble ones [e]; but when the fate of that once glorious city had been finally ſealed by Hadrian, and not the moſt diſtant hope could any longer be entertained by the Jews of ſeeing their ancient government re-eſtabliſhed, theſe ſame paſtors and miniſters, for the moſt part, conceived a wiſh to have it believed by their flocks that they themſelves had ſucceeded to the rights of the Jewiſh prieſthood. The biſhops, therefore, made it their buſineſs thenceforward to inculcate the notion that they were inveſted with a character reſembling that of the great high prieſt of the Jews, and were conſequently poſſeſſed of all thoſe rights which had been recogniſed as belonging to the Jewiſh pontiff. The functions of the ordinary Jewiſh prieſts were, in like manner, ſtated to have devolved, though under a more perfect form, on the preſbyters of the Chriſtian church: and finally, the deacons were placed on a parallel with the Levites or inferior miniſters of the temple. Whether the compariſon thus inſtituted between functions altogether oppoſite in their nature, had its origin in art and deſign, or was rather the offſpring of ignorance and imprudence, is a thing not now to be aſcertained; of this, however, there can be no doubt, that having once been approved of and

CENT. II.

Compariſon of the Chriſtian with the Jewiſh prieſthood.

[e] Ignatius, in the commencement of his epiſtles, ſtyles himſelf Θεόφορον, *deiferum*, a title aſſumed by him, as it ſhould ſeem, in common with other biſhops of his time, and importing a man commiſſioned to make known to the world the will and commands of the Deity.

admitted

CENT. II.

admitted to be juſt, it not only gave riſe to a variety of errors, and introduced a greater diſtinction between teachers and learners than ſeems conſonant to the ſpirit of the Chriſtian diſcipline, but alſo very materially added to the rights and emoluments of the miniſters and diſpenſers of Chriſt's word [*f*].

Compariſon of the Chriſtian with the Jewiſh prieſthood.

[*f*] This compariſon of the Jewiſh with the Chriſtian ſacred order, amongſt other things, unqueſtionably gave riſe to the claim of tythes and firſt fruits, which is certainly of higher antiquity than the time of Conſtantine the Great. And it ſeems not at all unlikely that a deſire of augmenting their income, which was but ſlender and uncertain, might have firſt ſuggeſted to certain of the biſhops this plan of inveſting the miniſters of the goſpel with the rights of the Jewiſh prieſthood. That the offering of the firſt fruits had already, in the age of which we are treating, come to be regarded as a matter of divine right, is placed, as it were, beyond all doubt by Irenæus, who, in his work *contra Hæreſes*, lib. iv. cap. xxxii. § 5. p. 249. repreſents it as having been inculcated by Chriſt himſelf in the celebration of the laſt ſupper. *Chriſtus ſuis diſcipulis dans conſilium primitias Deo offerre ex ſuis creaturis, non quaſi indigenti, ſed ut ipſi nec infructuoſi nec ingrati ſint, eum qui ex creatura panis eſt, accepit et gratias egit, dicens, Hoc eſt meum corpus, &c.* And in cap. xxxiv. p. 250. we are told by him, *offerre igitur oportet Deo primitias ejus creaturæ, ſicut et Moſes ait, non apparebis vacuus, &c.* From which paſſages it is manifeſt that the Chriſtian teachers had already conceived the plan of bettering their condition by calling in the authority of the Moſaic law. That tithes had not, at this time, been eſtabliſhed, at leaſt in the Latin church, is, I think, equally to be proved from Irenæus, who, in cap. xxxiv. p. 250. ſays, *Et propter hoc illi quidem* (the Jewiſh prieſts) *decimas ſuorum habebant conſecratas: qui autem perceperunt libertatem* (*i.e.* the Chriſtians) *omnia quæ ſunt ipſorum ad dominicos decernunt uſus, hilariter et libere dantes.* It is certain, however, that in the Greek and oriental churches they began to be adopted ſooner than in the Latin ones, and were rendered, I am led to think, even ſo early as this century, inaſmuch as mention is made of them by the Greek writers of the third century, and alſo in the apoſtolical conſtitutions, as of a thing well known and eſtabliſhed.

XXV. The

CENT. II.

A taſte for philoſophy introduced amongſt the Chriſtians.

XXV. The external change thus wrought in the conſtitution of the church would have been, however, far leſs detrimental to the intereſts of Chriſtianity, had it not been accompanied by others of an internal nature, which ſtruck at the very vitals of religion, and tended, in no ſmall degree, to affect the credit of thoſe ſacred writings on which the entire ſyſtem of Chriſtian diſcipline relies for ſupport. Of theſe the moſt conſiderable and important are to be attributed to a taſte for the cultivation of philoſophy and human learning, which, during the preceding century, if not altogether treated with neglect and contempt by the Chriſtians, had at leaſt been wiſely kept under, and by no means permitted to blend itſelf with religion; but in the age of which we are now treating burſt forth on a ſudden into a flame, and ſpread itſelf with the utmoſt rapidity throughout a conſiderable part of the church. This may be accounted for in ſome meaſure from its having been the practice of the many Greek philoſophers, who in the courſe of this century were induced to embrace Chriſtianity, not only to retain their priſtine denomination, garb, and mode of living, but alſo to perſiſt in recommending the ſtudy of philoſophy, and initiating youth therein. In proof of this we may from amidſt numerous other examples adduce in particular that of Juſtin the celebrated philoſopher and martyr [g]. The immediate nurſery and very cradle, as it were, of Chriſtian philoſophy muſt however be

[g] That Juſtin Martyr continued to wear the philoſopher's mantle ſubſequently to his embracing Chriſtianity is evident from the exordium to his dialogue with Trypho, ſince

CENT. II.

A taſte for philoſophy introduced amongſt the Chriſtians.

be placed in the celebrated ſeminary which long flouriſhed at Alexandria under the denomination of the Catechetical ſchool. For the perſons who preſided therein in the courſe of the age of which we are treating, namely, Pantænus, Athenagoras, and Clement of Alexandria, not only engaged with ardour in the cultivation of philoſophy themſelves, but alſo exerted their influence in perſuading thoſe whom they were educating for the office of teachers in the church, to follow their example in this reſpect, and make it their practice to aſſociate philoſophical principles with thoſe of religion [*b*]. It is to be obſerved

ſince Trypho is there made to ſay that he conceived him to be a philoſopher from his garb. Origen, in a letter preſerved by Euſebius, *Hiſtor. Eccleſ.* lib. vi. cap. xix. ſtates that Heraclas, who was afterwards biſhop of Alexandria, was accuſtomed, previouſly to his ſtudying philoſophy, to appear cloathed after the common faſhion, κοινῇ [illegible]; but that upon his placing himſelf under the tuition of Ammonius, he aſſumed the philoſopher's mantle and continued ever after to wear it; even notwithſtanding his being received into the order of preſbyters. Ἀποδυσάμενος καὶ φιλόσοφον ἀναλαβὼν σχῆμα μέχρι τῦ δεῦρο τηρεῖ. Vid. Origen. *Opp.* tom. i. p. 2. edit. Benedict. Jerome in his *Catal. Script. Eccleſ.* cap. xx. p. 86. edit. Fabric. ſpeaking of the Chriſtian philoſopher Ariſtides, ſays, *Ariſtides Athenienſis, philoſophus eloquentiſſimus et ſub priſtino habitu diſcipulus Chriſti.* There can ſurely be no neceſſity for my adducing more inſtances than theſe. A ſplendid encomium on philoſophy from the pen of Juſtin Martyr occurs at p. 5, 6. of his dialogue *cum Tryphone*, where he pronounces it to be "the chief good," μέγιστον κτῆμα, "a thing moſt acceptable in the ſight of God, and the only ſure guide to a ſtate of perfect felicity." A more ancient encomiaſt of philoſophy is not, I believe, to be pointed out amongſt the Chriſtian writers. He defines philoſophy, p. 12, to be ἐπιστήμη τῦ ὄντος καὶ τῆ ἀληθῦς ἐπίγνωσις. "the ſcience of being," (that is, of thoſe things which are real and immutable,) "and the knowledge of truth." The end or object of philoſophy he pronounces to be εὐδαιμονίαν, "felicity."

[*b*] Pantænus was, without doubt, the firſt of the Egyptian

obſerved however, that what was termed by theſe philoſophy, was not the diſcipline of any par-

CENT. II.

A taſte for philoſophy introduced amongſt the Chriſtians.

Egyptian Chriſtians that engaged in the ſtudy of philoſophy: for Origen, in that epiſtle of his preſerved by Euſebius, *Hiſtor. Eccleſ.* lib. vi. cap. xix. p. 221. wherein he replies to thoſe who had imputed a love of letters and philoſophy to him as a fault, defends himſelf under the cover of only two examples, the one ancient, the other of recent date: the former is that of Pantænus, the latter of Heraclas, whom he repreſents as having been one of his fellow-ſtudents in the ſchool of Ammonius. Had any one amongſt the Chriſtians of Egypt engaged in the cultivation of philoſophy before Pantænus, there can be no doubt but that Origen, whom nothing whatever that had taken place in antecedent times amongſt the Egyptian Chriſtians appears to have eſcaped, would, by way of more readily vindicating himſelf, have brought forward earlier inſtances of an attachment to philoſophy than even that of Pantænus.—That I ſhould ſay any thing of Athenagoras appears to me altogether unneceſſary, as there is extant, in addition to the apology written by him in defence of the Chriſtians, a tract of his concerning the reſurrection of the dead, which is replete with evidence of the great extent to which he engaged in the cultivation of philoſophy. Clement, the third preſident of the ſchool of Alexandria in ſucceſſion from Pantænus, and whom, by way of diſtinction, we uſually ſtyle *the Alexandrian*, has left behind him, in various things which he publiſhed, abundant proof of his partiality for philoſophy, ſuch a partiality, indeed, as appears to have exceeded all ordinary limits. Joſ. Aug. Orſi, in the *Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory* written by him in Italian, tom. ii. p. 406. conſiders this Clement as the firſt of the Chriſtian writers that eſpouſed the cauſe of philoſophy. But he is deceived; Juſtin Martyr, as we have already ſeen, had previouſly ſtood forth as its advocate and eulogiſt, and undoubtedly Pantænus in his day had done the ſame. There can be no queſtion, however, but that Clement is to be ranked amongſt the firſt and principal Chriſtian defenders and teachers of philoſophic ſcience, indeed that he may even be placed at the head of thoſe who devoted themſelves to the cultivation of philoſophy with an ardour that knew no bounds, and were ſo blind and miſguided as to engage in the hopeleſs attempt of producing an accommodation between the principles of philoſophic ſcience and

CENT. II.

particular ſect, but a ſelection of ſuch principles and maxims from all the different philoſophic

A taſte for philoſophy introduced amongſt the Chriſtians.

and thoſe of the Chriſtian religion. He himſelf expreſsly tells us in his *Stromata*, lib. i. cap. i. p. 326. opp. that he would not hand down Chriſtian truth pure and unmixed, but ἀναμεμιγμένην τοῖς φιλοσοφίας δόγμασι, μᾶλλον δὲ ἐγκεκαλυμμένην καὶ ἐπικεκρυμμένην, "aſſociated with, or rather veiled by and ſhrouded under the precepts of philoſophy." For, according to him, the rudiments or ſeeds of celeſtial wiſdom communicated by Chriſt to the world, lay hid in the philoſophy of the Greeks, after the ſame manner as the eſculent part of a nut lies concealed within a ſhell. And on this ground we find him, in the ſame book, cap. iv. p. 331. entertaining a belief that Solomon, in *Prov.* ii. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, meant to inculcate the ſtudy of philoſophy, and attributing to the cultivation of philoſophy a certain efficacy in rendering men juſt and upright, τοῖς ὑπὸ φιλοσοφίας δεδικαιωμένοις βοήθεια ζητεῖται. He had before ſaid, at p. 319, that the ſouls of men were fed or nouriſhed κατὰ τὴν ἑλληνικὴν φιλοσοφίαν, "by the philoſophy of the Greeks," and added the above-noticed compariſon of this ſpecies of philoſophy with a nut, to which he frequently has recourſe, by way of expreſſing his opinion of the nature and value of human wiſdom. For he appears to have been firmly perſuaded that the eſſence of the Greek philoſophy was ſound, wholeſome, and ſalutary, in fact, that it was perfectly conſonant to the ſpirit of Chriſtian wiſdom, but that it was compaſſed about and veiled from immediate obſervation by a cloud of ſuperſtition and idle fictions, juſt in the ſame way as the kernel of a nut is concealed by the ſhell, and that we ſhould therefore make it our buſineſs induſtriouſly to penetrate this exterior covering, ſo as to diſcover the true relationſhip between human and divine wiſdom. *Stromat.* lib. vii. p. 832. cap. ii. The origin of the Greek philoſophy he, without ſcruple, attributes to the Deity himſelf, whom however, in the communication of it to the world, he conceives to have availed himſelf of the inſtrumentality of inferior agents, ὅτος ἐστὶν ὁ διδοὺς καὶ τοῖς Ἕλλησι τὴν φιλοσοφίαν διὰ τῶν ὑποδεεστέρων ἀγγέλων. *Hic* (the Deity) *eſt, qui dat Græcis philoſophiam per inferiores angelos.* To the Chriſtian religion he aſſigns a ſuperiority over philoſophy, inaſmuch as the Lord reſerved the promulgation of it for himſelf: ἀλλ' ἡ μερὶς Κυρίου ἡ δόξα τῶν πιστευόντων, *at opinio credentium* (the religion profeſſed by the Chriſtians) *pars eſt Domini* (was communicated by the Lord himſelf). In explaining and illuſtrating

ſophic ſyſtems as appeared to be moſt conſentaneous to right reaſon, and admitted of being illuſtrating his opinion on this head, he is led to intimate his perfect conviction as to a point on which we find him pretty plainly expreſſing his ſentiments in other places, and in which Juſtin Martyr coincides with him; namely, that before Chriſt's advent, philoſophy was the way to eternal life, and that therefore no doubt can be entertained of the Grecian ſages having obtained ſalvation. In his *Stromat.* lib. i. cap. vii. p. 337. lib. vi. cap. viii. p. 773. he ſays, that philoſophy was divinely communicated to the Greeks as a ſpecial teſtament or covenant, and that it in fact conſtitutes the baſis of that doctrine which the world has ſince received from Chriſt: τὴν δὲ φιλοσοφίαν καὶ μᾶλλον Ἕλλησιν ὅιον διαθήκην δικαίαν αὐτοῖς δεδόσθαι, ὑπόδαθρον ὄσαν τῆς κατὰ Χριστὸν φιλοσοφίας. In ſaying this, however, he means it to be underſtood that the prince of darkneſs, whom he terms the inveterate cultivator of tares, had plentifully diſſeminated his noxious weeds in the philoſophy of Greece as well as in that of the barbarous nations. In the ſame book vi. *Stromat.* cap. xvii. p. 822. & ſeq. he urges many things in favour of the dignity and excellence of philoſophy, amongſt which the following paſſage is particularly worthy of remark: Εἰκότως ἂν Ἰουδαίοις μὲν νόμος, Ἕλλησι δὲ φιλοσοφία μέχρι τῆς παρουσίας. ἐντεῦθεν δὲ ἡ κλῆσις ἡ καθολικὴ εἰς περιούσιον δικαιοσύνης λαὸν κατὰ τὴν ἐκ πίστεως διδασκαλίαν: *merito ergo Judæis quidem lex, Græcis autem data eſt philoſophia uſque ad adventum* (of Chriſt): *ex eo autem tempore univerſalis eſt vocatio ad peculiarem populum juſtitiæ per eam quæ eſt ex fide doctrinam* (the Chriſtian religion). The ſenſe, then, entertained by Clement of philoſophy is very clearly to be perceived. Previously to the coming of Chriſt, philoſophy had, according to his opinion, been the ſame thing to the Greeks that the law of Moſes was to the Hebrews. Both of them were originally derived from God, who, however, in the communication of them to mortals, availed himſelf of the miniſtration of angels. Both of them pointed out the road to ſalvation; the former to the Greeks, the latter to the Jews. Neither the one nor the other ſyſtem of diſcipline could pretend to abſolute perfection, nor did either of them preſerve itſelf free from the adulteration of human opinions. In proceſs of time, therefore, it pleaſed the Deity to impart to the whole human race a more perfect wiſdom through Jeſus Chriſt. Neither the law of the Jews, nor the philoſophy of the Greeks, however, is to be conſi-

CENT. II.

A taſte for philoſophy introduced amongſt the Chriſtians.

CENT. II.

A taſte for philoſophy introduced amongſt the Chriſtians.

ing ſo tempered and modified as to reconcile them, in a certain degree, with Chriſtian notions and tenets [*i*].

XXVI. The

dered as thereby aboliſhed, but as in part perfected, and in part diſencumbered of various faulty particulars, the offſpring of mere human refinement and conceit. To any one entertaining an opinion like this, it muſt of neceſſity appear that the leading principles of Chriſtianity are ſo to be underſtood and interpreted as to make them accord with the maxims and precepts of the beſt and wiſeſt of the Grecian ſages. It will readily then, I think, be granted by every one who ſhall duly conſider the conſtancy with which the prefects of the ſchool of Alexandria, from the time of Pantænus, perſiſted in recommending and inculcating the ſtudy of philoſophy, that to this ſchool and its maſters is chiefly to be aſcribed that love of philoſophic ſpeculation to which the primitive Chriſtians were evidently ſtrangers, but which towards the cloſe of this century began to diffuſe itſelf gradually throughout the whole church, and inſenſibly to ſupplant that holy ſimplicity which characteriſed Chriſtianity during the firſt age. For further information reſpecting this celebrated ſchool at Alexandria, which, whether it was productive of moſt benefit or detriment to the Chriſtian cauſe, would, I believe, be found hard to determine, the reader may conſult the *Antiquitates Academicæ* of Herm. Conringius, p. 29.; a particular diſſertation on the ſubject by And. Schmidius, prefixed by Andr. Hyperius to his book *de Catechęſi*; a work written in Italian, by Auliſius, *Delle Scuole Sacre*, lib. ii. cap. i. ii. p. 5—17. and cap. xxi. p. 92; *The Hiſtory of Catechiſms*, in German, by Langemackius, P. I. p. 86. 122. & ſeq. as well as other works.

[*i*] Clement of Alexandria, who certainly holds the firſt place amongſt the patrons of philoſophy, ſupplies us with this definition of it; (*Stromat.* lib. i. cap. vii. p. 338. edit. Potterian.) Φιλοσοφίαν δὲ ἐγὼ τὴν Στωικὴν λέγω, οὐδὲ τὴν Πλατωνικὴν, ἢ τὴν Ἐπικουρείον τε, καὶ Ἀριστοτελικὴν, ἀλλ' ὅσα εἴρηται παρ' ἑκάστη τῶν αἱρέσεων τούτων καλῶς, δικαιοσύνην μετὰ εὐσεβοῦς ἐπιστήμης ἐκδιδάσκοντα τοῦτο συμπᾶν τὸ ἐκλεκτικὸν φιλοσοφίαν φημί· ὅσα δὲ ἀνθρωπίνων λογισμῶν ἀποτεμόμενοι παρεχάραξαν, ταῦτα οὐκ ἄν ποτε θεῖα εἴποιμ' ἄν. *Philoſophiam autem dico non Stoicam, nec Platonicam, aut Epicuream et Ariſtotelicam, ſed quæcumque ab his ſectis recte dicta ſunt, quæ docent juſtitiam cum pia ſcientia, hoc totum ſelectum dico philoſophiam: cetera autem quæ ex humanis ratiocinationibus præfecta adulteraverunt, ea nunquam divina dixerim.*

CENT. II.

Contentions amongſt the Chriſtians with regard to philoſophy.

XXVI. The riſe, however, of this taſte for philoſophical ſpeculation, and the aſcendancy which they perceived it gradually acquiring in the minds of ſo many of their teachers, became a ſource of the moſt poignant regret to all ſuch as continued ſteadfaſtly attached to that ancient and ſimple ſpecies of piety which had been delivered down by the Apoſtles and their diſciples; inaſmuch as they ſaw reaſon to fear that the cauſe of celeſtial truth might be thereby materially injured, as in reality proved to be the caſe, and that divine wiſdom would not long retain either its proper value or dignity in the eſtimation of mankind. In conſequence of this the Chriſtian church became divided in-

erim. Now all this, without queſtion, appears to be well and wiſely ſaid, and perfectly accords with what is lain down reſpecting the nature of philoſophy by Juſtin Martyr, in his *Dial. cum Tryphone*, p. 6. & ſeq. But the truth is, that every one who will be at the pains to turn over the writings of Clement himſelf as well as thoſe of his very celebrated diſciple Origen, and of Juſtin, muſt very readily perceive that many things were regarded by them as perfectly conſentaneous to right reaſon and the ſpirit of Chriſtianity which are, in fact, not to be reconciled with either. Notwithſtanding all the deſire which theſe good men evince to perſuade us that they entertained a partiality for no particular ſect, they were certainly attached to the Eclectics, a ſect that flouriſhed formerly in Egypt, and conſidered every thing as indiſputable which had received the ſanction of that ſect. Of this not a doubt can remain with any one who will take the trouble to compare Clement and Origen with Philo Judæus, one equally a diſciple of the Eclectic ſchool. This ſect of the Eclectics, of which a particular account is given by Ja. Brucker in his *Hiſtoria Philoſophiæ critica*, although it culled ſomething from every ſect, was yet wont to give the preference or chief authority in every thing relating to the Deity, the human race, and this nether world, to Plato, than whom, it was ſuppoſed, none had retained more of the original and genuine philoſophy of human nature.

CENT. II.

Contentions amongſt the Chriſtians with regard to philoſophy.

to two parties which oppoſed each other with the utmoſt warmth; the one regarding every ſpecies of human learning, and more particularly philoſophy, with deteſtation and contempt, and enjoining the brethren to maintain the faith in all its genuine ſimplicity; the other contending for the utility and excellence of philoſophic diſquiſition, and encouraging the teachers of the church to occupy themſelves in demonſtrating the accordance of religion with the principles of right reaſon [*k*]. The iſſue of this diſpute, which laſted for a conſiderable

[*k*] Reſpecting this contention between the adverſaries and friends of philoſophy, abundant teſtimonies are to be adduced both of this and the ſucceeding century. Amongſt thoſe of the age now under review, there is extant in Euſebius, *Hiſtor. Eccleſ.* lib. v. cap. xxviii. p. 197. a remarkable paſſage of an unknown author who had written a book in oppoſition to the errors of Artemon, and who inveighs ſeverely againſt the Artemonites for neglecting the ſtudy of the Holy Scriptures, and devoting themſelves to the cultivation of philoſophy and the Ariſtotelian logic, endeavouring to find ſupport for their errors reſpecting Chriſt in the arts and diſcipline of unbelievers, *artibus ac diſciplinis infidelium*, (ſo Valeſius tranſlates the words τὰις τῶν ἀπίςων τέχναις), and finally ſtudying to obſcure and deprave the ſimple religion of the New Teſtament by encumbering it with the ſubtle refinements of vain and impious men, τῇ τῶν ἀθέων πανυργίᾳ (that is, as we may gather from what he before ſays, the rules and precepts of the Ariſtotelian logic). In this paſſage, there are two things that preſent themſelves as chiefly deſerving of remark. The firſt is, that the men who are therein reprehended, were accuſtomed to ſcrutinize ſuch paſſages of ſcripture as were urged againſt them, by the very niceſt logical teſt: a practice which this writer heſitates not to pronounce impious and intolerable. Κἄν, αὐτοῖς προτείνῃ τὶς ῥητὸν γραφῆς θεικῆς, ἐξετάζουσι πότερον συνημμένον ἢ διεζευγμένον δύναται ποιῆσαι σχῆμα συλλογισμοῦ. *Quod ſi quis aliquem divinæ ſcripturæ locum eis objecerit, examinant, utrum connexum an diſjunctum ſyllogiſmi genus ex eo confici poſſit.* The other thing that particularly offers itſelf to

derable while, at length was, that victory declared itſelf in favour of the patrons of philoſophy, obſervation in the paſſage we allude to is, that the claſs of men whoſe opinions and practices it combats were much devoted to the ſtudy of geometry, and applied to Chriſtian theology that mode of teaching and demonſtrating which is peculiar to geometricians: καταλίποντες δὲ τὰς ἁγίας τῆ θεῖ γραφὰς, γεωμετρίαν ἐπιτηδεύουσιν, οἳ ἂν ἐκ τῆς γῆς ὄντες καὶ ἐκ τῆς γῆς λαλῶντες. *Relictis atque abjectis ſacris Dei ſcripturis, geometriæ ſtudent, quippe qui terreſtres ſint et loquantur terrena.* —Εὐκλείδης γὰν παρὰ τίσιν αὐτῶν φιλοπόνως γεωμετρεῖται. *Euclidis igitur geometria apud nonnullos eorum ſtudioſe excolitur.* There is, therefore, nothing done at preſent for which a precedent is not to be found in former times. When we find the culture of philoſophy, of logic, and geometry placed by this man amongſt the crimes of heretics, it is pretty plain in what degree of repute theſe ſtudies were held by the generality of Chriſtians in thoſe days. Many very diſtinct veſtiges of this diſpute reſpecting the value of philoſophy and its uſe in theology, are to be met with in the writings of Clement of Alexandria, who, moreover, ſometimes takes occaſion to cenſure with ſufficient acrimony thoſe who portended great detriment to the cauſe of Chriſtianity from the introduction of philoſophy into the church, and called upon all the ſincere profeſſors of Chriſtianity to revert to the ancient ſimplicity of the apoſtles. To thoſe who read him, it will be obvious that the things which are agitated with ſo much eagerneſs in the preſent day, engroſſed equally the attention of former ages, and that the contention between faith and reaſon, by which the world has been diſturbed ſo greatly of late, is by no means a matter of recent origin. In the very outſet of the work to which he gives the title of *Stromata*, we find him undertaking the defence of philoſophy. The opponents of philoſophy he, in lib. i. cap. i. p. 326. divides into two claſſes: the firſt conſiſting of the more moderate ones, or thoſe who contended merely that philoſophy was of no uſe. "I am no ſtranger," ſays he, "to what is urged by ſome, whoſe ignorance leads them to ſee danger in every thing, namely, that our attention ought to be excluſively directed to things of the firſt neceſſity, and on which we may build our faith, and not be ſuffered to occupy itſelf in foreign and fruitleſs ſtudies, ſuch as buſy and detain the mind without conducting it to any certain end." The other claſs was compoſed

CENT. II.

Contentions amongſt the Chriſtians with regard to philoſophy.

of

CENT. II.

loſophy, and that thoſe teachers came to be moſt reſpected who, in unfolding the doctrines of

Contentions amongſt the Chriſtians with regard to philoſophy.

of thoſe who were more vehement in their oppoſition to philoſophy, contending that it was not merely uſeleſs but pernicious, and the invention of the parent of evil. "Others, however," he proceeds, "carry their hoſtility ſo far as to rank philoſophy with the greateſt of evils, and conſider it as invented for the ruin of mankind by ſome malignant adverſary," πρὸς τινὸς ἐυρετῆ πονηρῆ, that is, as he himſelf explains the expreſſion in another place, "the devil." To the former of theſe he artfully replies, cap. ii. p. 327. (I.) If the inutility of philoſophy were even as certain as you pretend, ſtill it is a thing both uſeful and neceſſary that its vanity and emptineſs ſhould be demonſtrated, and as this cannot be done without a knowledge of its principles, we have, even here, an argument that the ſtudy of philoſophy is not without its uſe; εἰ καὶ ἄχρηστος ἐστι φιλοσοφία, εἰ ἔυχρηστος ἡ τῆς ἀχρηστίας βεβαίωσις, ἔυχρηστος. That I have aſſigned to theſe words their true ſenſe is, I think, placed out of all doubt by what follows. Proceeding with his reply he obſerves, (II.) That even if philoſophy, when regarded apart by itſelf, was of no uſe whatever, and contributed nothing towards aiding the Chriſtian in the attainment of his grand object, yet ſtill an acquaintance with it muſt be highly ornamental to the character of a Chriſtian teacher, and by giving him a certain dignity and authority in the eyes of his auditors, muſt enable him, with the greater eaſe, to make an impreſſion on the minds of thoſe who were hoſtile to the cauſe of religion. With the other claſs, who conſidered philoſophy as pernicious, and nothing better than an invention of the devil himſelf, he diſputes at much length, and, as we are bound to confeſs, neither unſkilfully nor idly. We ſhall merely give the ſubſtance of a few of his arguments. (I.) In the firſt place, then, he contends that philoſophy is not calculated to draw men away from faith or piety, as its adverſaries affirmed, but was rather to be looked upon as the ſafeguard of religion, inaſmuch as it ſupplied men with a fuller demonſtration of faith, συγγυμνασίαν τινα πίστεως ἀποδεικτικὴν. (II.) That from a collation or compariſon together of ſuch of the principles of philoſophy and Chriſtianity as were inconſiſtent with or oppoſed to each other, the truth was rendered more apparent, and our ſtock of knowledge conſequently much improved, than which nothing could be more deſirable or important. (III.) That our

of religion, called in the aid of philoſophical principles and precepts. CENT. II.

XXVII. That our conviction of mind muſt neceſſarily be ſtrengthened and confirmed by our acquiring that more accurate knowledge of religion which was to be obtained through the aſſiſtance of philoſophy; βέβαιον λαμβανόντων πεῖσμα τῆς ἀληθοῦς καταλήψεως. And here, by the bye, I muſt obſerve, that I cannot help wiſhing for a new tranſlation of Clement by ſome one well ſkilled in the Greek language. The old one by Hervetus fails, in many places, to give us the ſenſe of the original, and in others expreſſes it in a very obſcure manner. (IV.) That a knowledge of philoſophy was requiſite in order to repel and put to ſilence the enemies of the Chriſtian faith, cap. iii. p. 325. ſince it was the practice of ſome of theſe to make ſport of the truth, and repreſent it as replete with barbariſm; τὸ βάρβαρον ἐν παιδείᾳ τετίμενοι: whilſt others were accuſtomed to attack the Chriſtians with various little teazing ſubtilties and jeſts, which, although founded in fallacy, were yet conceived with too much art to be expoſed and refuted without ſome degree of ſkill. That we ought to provide ourſelves, therefore, with philoſophy, as a kind of defenſive armour for repelling the weapons of ſophiſtry. Cap. v. p. 331. From theſe arguments we may pretty well collect the motives by which the Chriſtian teachers of the ſecond century were led to cultivate philoſophy. There was one inducement, however, of which Clement takes no notice, but which I cannot help conſidering as having been a very principal one. The Chriſtian teachers were well aware of what eſſential benefit it would be in promoting their cauſe, not only with the multitude, but alſo amongſt men of the higher orders, could the philoſophers, whoſe authority and eſtimation with the world was unbounded, be brought to embrace Chriſtianity. With a view, therefore, of accompliſhing this deſirable object, they not only adopted the ſtudy of philoſophy themſelves, but became loud in their recommendation of it to others, declaring that the difference between Chriſtianity and philoſophy was but trifling, and conſiſted merely in the former being of a nature ſomewhat more perfect than the latter. And it is moſt certain that this kind of conduct was ſo far productive of the deſired effect, as to cauſe not a few of the philoſophers to enrol themſelves under the Chriſtian banner. Thoſe who have

Contentions amongſt the Chriſtians with regard to philoſophy.

CENT. II.

The ſchool of Ammonius Saccas.

XXVII. That particular ſcheme or mode of philoſophiſing which was adopted at the firſt

have peruſed the various works written by ſuch of the ancient philoſopers as had been induced to embrace Chriſtianity, cannot have failed to remark that the Chriſtian diſcipline was regarded by all of them in no other light than as a certain mode of philoſophiſing. But to return to Clement, in other places, *Stromat.* lib. i. cap. xvii. xviii. p.366.we find him adverting to a third opinion entertained by many Chriſtians reſpecting philoſophy, and which holds, as it were, a middle ſtation between the two already noticed. This opinion was, that philoſophy had been ſurreptitiouſly brought down from heaven, and communicated to mankind by thoſe angels whom, according to the ancients, a love of pleaſure had induced to rebel againſt God, and take to themſelves wives from amongſt the daughters of men. Ἔνιοι δὲ δυνάμεις τινὰς ὑποβεβηκοίας ἐμπνευσαι τὴν πᾶσαν φιλοσοφίαν ὑπειλήφασιν. *Nonnulli autem* (whom he diſtinguiſhes from thoſe who maintained that the devil himſelf was the author of philoſophy) *univerſam philoſophiam quaſdam poteſtates e cælo delapſas inſpiraſſe exiſtimant.* To this opinion many of that age ſubſcribed; amongſt whom we find that Hermias, who was the author of a tract that has reached our days under the title of *Irriſio Philoſophiæ*, and is commonly annexed to Tatian. In the exordium of his little work this writer ſays, δοκεῖ γάρ μοι τὴν ἀρχὴν (φιλοσοφίαν) εἰληφέναι ἀπὸ τῆς τῶν Ἀγγέλων ἀποστασίας. *Videtur mihi (philoſophia) ab angelorum defectione principium repetiiſſe.* In proof of this he adduces the ſtrifes and contentions of philoſophers. Indeed Clement himſelf appears not entirely to diſſent from this opinion. Vid. *Stromat.* lib. v. p. 650. Thoſe who thought thus reſpecting the origin of philoſophy, could not, of courſe, altogether reject and condemn it, but amongſt them there were not wanting ſome, however, who deemed it ſinful for men to avail themſelves of what had reached them thus ſurreptitiouſly and through ſo polluted a channel. To theſe Clement replies, that it was indeed a very heinous crime in the fallen angels to be guilty of this theft, but that, notwithſtanding the circumſtance of its having been ſtolen, the excellence and value of the thing itſelf had been neither ſullied nor diminiſhed. Various other arguments, by which Clement defends the cauſe of philoſophy, and combats thoſe of the Chriſtians who would fain have

CENT. II.

The ſchool of Ammonius Saccas.

firſt by the præfects of the ſchool of Alexandria, and a few others, did not indeed maintain its ground for any great length of time, but was by degrees conſiderably departed from: the ſpirit of philoſophiſing, however, ſo far from experiencing any decline or abatement, continued to increaſe and diffuſe itſelf more and more, particularly towards the cloſe of this century, when a new ſect ſprung up at Alexandria under the title of "The Modern Platoniſts." The founder of this ſect was Ammonius Saccas, a man of a ſubtile penetrating genius, but prone to deviate, in many things, from right reaſon, and too much inclined to indulge in ridiculous flights of ima-

have arreſted its progreſs, are to be met with in his *Stromata*. Great pains are particularly taken by him in refuting ſuch as maintained that philoſophy was invented by the evil one for the purpoſe of deceiving the human race and leading them aſtray from the truth; from whence we may infer, that this opinion was more generally received, and had taken deeper root than the reſt in the minds of the multitude. To what I have above noticed I ſhall merely add what he urges in reply to thoſe who were accuſtomed to caſt in the teeth of the advocates of philoſophy the words of St. Paul in *Col.* ii. 8. admoniſhing the Chriſtians to beware of being ſpoiled through philoſophy. In the opinion of Clement, *Stromat.* lib. vi. cap. viii. p. 771. 799. St. Paul is to be conſidered as addreſſing himſelf in this place to the more perfect Chriſtians, or, as he terms them, thoſe "who had attained to the very heights of Gnoſtic intelligence, τὸν δὲ τὰ γνωστικὰ μεταλαμβάνοντα ὕψη," and that what he meant was to caution ſuch Chriſtians againſt reverting to the philoſophy of the Greeks, inaſmuch as this ſpecies of philoſophy was merely a kind of elementary learning, στοιχειώδη διδασκαλία, comprehending nothing more than the firſt rudiments of wiſdom, a want of which could well be diſpenſed with in Chriſtians, who had arrived at the higheſt degree of divine information. But all this is evidently ſtrained, and in direct oppoſition to the obvious and natural ſenſe conveyed by the words of St. Paul.

gination.

CENT. II.

gination [*l*]. In addition to a multitude of others who flocked to this man for inſtruction, his

The ſchool of Ammonius Saccas.

[*l*] Particular celebrity attaches itſelf, both in ſacred and literary hiſtory, to the name of Ammonius Saccas, a philoſopher of the Alexandrian ſchool, from whom proceeded thoſe philoſophical fanatics the "Modern Platoniſts," who, from the third century to the ſixth, lorded it with deſpotic ſway over every other ſect throughout nearly the whole of the Roman empire. That the life and actions of a man capable of effecting ſo great a change in the aſpect of Chriſtianity as well as philoſophy, ſhould be for the moſt part ſo completely involved in obſcurity as to defy elucidation, is certainly much to be regretted; ſince, could we obtain a more accurate knowledge as to theſe, it would no doubt enable us, with much greater readineſs, to account for many opinions and cuſtoms that ſprung up amongſt the Chriſtians ſubſequently to his time. Whatever could be obtained on the ſubject from ancient authors, hath been diligently collected together and illuſtrated, with his uſual ability, by J. Brucker, *Hiſtor. Critic. Philoſoph.* tom. ii. p. 205, & ſeq. who has alſo entered at much length into the hiſtory of the ſect of which Ammonius was the founder. The reader may alſo conſult Jo. Alb. Fabricius, *Biblioth. Græc.* lib. iv. cap. xxvi. p. 159. Reſpecting the religion of Ammonius, in particular, there is conſiderable doubt. Porphyry, who had had the opportunity of hearing Plotinus, one of the principal diſciples of Ammonius, ſays, (apud Euſeb. *Hiſtor. Eccleſ.* lib. vi. cap. xix. p. 220.) that he was born of Chriſtian parents, but that, on arriving at man's eſtate, he went over to Paganiſm. Euſebius, however, contradicts Porphyry, and aſſerts that Ammonius continued ſtedfaſt in the Chriſtian faith to the end of his life. This diſcordance in the teſtimony of Euſebius and Porphyry, as to the religion in which Ammonius ended his days, has occaſioned much difference of opinion among men of erudition, ſome giving credit to the former, others to the latter. Thoſe who hold with Porphyry have certainly arguments of conſiderable weight on their ſide, and feeling ſenſibly their force, I was ſome time ſince induced to expreſs my conviction of the apoſtacy of Ammonius from Chriſtianity. To paſs over other things, who, let me aſk, can eaſily perſuade himſelf that the ſect of the Modern Platoniſts, than whom ſcarcely any ſet of men ever occaſioned greater evils and calamities to

lectures were conſtantly attended by a great number of Chriſtians, who were inflamed with an

CENT. II.

The ſchool of Ammonius Saccas.

to the Chriſtians, could poſſibly have been founded by a man who was actually himſelf a Chriſtian? The teſtimony of Euſebius as to this matter is not of the ſlighteſt weight; for it is evident that he was miſled by the name, and confounded the philoſopher Ammonius with a Chriſtian writer whoſe name was ſimilar. The Ammonius to whom Euſebius alludes had, he tells us, written a variety of things: Ammonius the philoſopher, we know for certain, never publiſhed any thing. On a full review, however, of the merits of this controverſy, I feel inclined to believe, that Ammonius, although, for the moſt part, an apoſtate in heart, and thoroughly averſe from the principles entertained by the Chriſtians in general, yet never openly ſeceded from the church, but diſguiſed the real nature and tendency of his diſcipline. Learned men will ſee whether there be any weight in the reaſons by which I have been led to this conjecture. (I.) When Ammonius firſt opened a ſchool at Alexandria, and for a long time afterwards, he was undoubtedly, in the true ſenſe of the word, a Chriſtian. For many years Origen, Heraclas, and various others of the Chriſtian youth, who had been captivated by a love of philoſophy, ſat under his tuition. But the teachers of the Alexandrian church would ſurely never have permitted theſe young men to ſelect for their maſter a perfidious renegado. Apoſtates of this deſcription were regarded in the light of impious peſts; and the moſt poſitive injunctions were given for no one to hold converſe with them. This one obſervation alone is ſufficient to detract much from the authority of Porphyry's teſtimony reſpecting the defection of Ammonius; for, according to that, Ammonius, as ſoon as he was of an age to think for himſelf, and to comprehend the firſt rudiments of philoſophy, renounced the profeſſion of Chriſtianity; which is notoriouſly falſe. (II.) There was no neceſſity for Ammonius to ſecede from the Chriſtian church. So far from entertaining any thing like an enmity to Chriſt, he held him in veneration as a perſon of a divine character and a teacher of celeſtial wiſdom. What he took exception to was the interpretation given by Chriſtians to the maxims and precepts of the goſpel. It was therefore very poſſible for him to continue amongſt the Chriſtians, and to join with them in paying every homage to Chriſt, but at the ſame time to aſſume the liberty of privately expounding the religion

CENT. II. an eager deſire after knowledge, and of whom two, namely, Origen and Heraclas, became after-

The ſchool of Ammonius Saccas.

religion of the goſpel according to that ſenſe in which he had been led to view it himſelf. But it may perhaps be objected to me, that Ammonius, although he entertained a veneration for Chriſt, yet held it proper to worſhip the heathen deities, a thing altogether incompatible with Chriſtian principles, and that, in the performance of this worſhip therefore, he muſt neceſſarily have ſeparated himſelf from the church: but this difficulty is, I think, eaſy to be gotten rid of by any one acquainted with what the Ammonian diſcipline actually was. What Ammonius enjoined was not that theſe gods ſhould be worſhipped, but that they ſhould not be treated with contempt; not that the worſhip of them was neceſſary, but that it was juſtifiable, decent, allowable. By the multitude, whoſe ruling paſſion is an eager appetite for bodily and ſenſual gratification, it was but fitting, according to the principles of the Ammonian ſect, that theſe gods ſhould have every ſort of homage paid them, inaſmuch as they were conſtituted by the ſupreme deity the guardians and diſpenſers of all thoſe good things which miniſter to the delight of the ſenſes; but no neceſſity whatever could exiſt for their being either invoked or worſhipped by a wiſe man and a philoſopher, whoſe object was the purifying of his ſoul, and keeping it, by means of meditation, as far as poſſible removed from every influence of the body. The gratifications of ſenſe not entering into the views of the latter, he might of courſe, they held, omit cultivating the favour of thoſe from whom ſuch gratifications are to be ſought, and ſhould confine his adoration to the parent of ſouls alone, the Supreme Being. (III.) The diſciples of Ammonius, as Porphyry declares in *Vit. Plotini.* c. iii. agreed amongſt themſelves, in conformity, no doubt, to an injunction of their preceptor, that they would not make commonly known the more abſtruſe and recondite doctrines of their maſter, from which reſolution, however, they afterwards thought proper to recede. Ammonius himſelf alſo ever declined committing his opinions to writing, and would communicate them only by word of mouth, leſt it might occaſion him diſturbance. But in none of his principles or maxims that have been divulged by his diſciples is there any, even the minuteſt thing that could poſſibly excite againſt him any ill-will, or bring him into any ſort of danger amongſt the heathen worſhippers. It appears, therefore, moſt likely that his motive for con-

afterwards very diſtinguiſhed characters, the former ſucceeding to the preſidency of the ſchool, the latter to that of the church of Alexandria [*m*]. By the Chriſtian diſciples of Ammonius, and more particularly by Origen, who in the ſucceeding century attained to a degree of eminence ſcarcely credible, the doctrines which they had derived from their maſter were ſeduloufly inſtilled into the minds of the youth with whoſe education they were entruſted, and by the efforts of theſe again, who were ſubſequently, for the moſt part, called to the miniſtry, the

CENT. II.

The ſchool of Ammonius Saccas.

concealing the leading principles of his doctrine, was a fear of the light in which they would have been regarded by the Chriſtians, amongſt whom he had been born and paſſed the greater part of his life: for had they once been able to diſcover the true nature and tendency of his doctrine, not a doubt can exiſt but that his excommunication would have followed as a matter of courſe. (IV.) The circumſtance of its being poſitively denied by Euſebius, and after him by Jerome, *Catal. Scriptor. Eccleſ.* cap. lv. that Ammonius ever deſerted Chriſtianity, although in regard to this they may not be ſtrictly correct, is yet an argument that his apoſtacy was a thing utterly unknown to theſe moſt experienced Chriſtian writers, and not only to them but to the whole Chriſtian world. But how, let me aſk, could the public defection of ſo great a man and philoſopher, if it had ever occurred, have failed to make a noiſe in the world, or altogether have eſcaped recollection.

[*m*] Origen, in an epiſtle preſerved by Euſebius, *Hiſtor. Eccleſ.* lib. vi. cap. xix. p. 221. ſays that Heraclas, at the time of his becoming acquainted with him, had been nearly five years under the inſtruction of a certain profeſſor of philoſophy. The name of this inſtructor he does not mention; but ſince he himſelf was taught philoſophy by Ammonius, there can be no doubt but that it was to this profeſſor he alluded. The probability is, that even at that time the credit of Ammonius was much on the decline in Egypt, and that on that account Origen ſtudiouſly avoided naming him, leſt the diſcovery of who had been his maſter, might ſupply his adverſaries with the means of exciting a ſtill greater degree of animoſity towards him.

CENT. II. love of philoſophy became pretty generally diffuſed throughout a conſiderable portion of the church.

The philoſophy of Ammonius.

XXVIII. The favourite object with Ammonius, as appears from the diſputations and writings of his diſciples, was that of not only bringing about a reconciliation between all the different philoſophic ſects, Greeks as well as barbarians [*n*], but alſo of producing a harmony of all religions, even of Chriſtianity and hea-

[*n*] The ſentiments of the ſect as to this are clearly expreſſed by the emperor Julian, than whom it could never boaſt of a more illuſtrious member, *Oratione* VI. *contra Cynicos*, opp. p. 184. Edit. Spanhemian. Μηδεὶς ὧν ἡμῖν τὴν φιλοσοφίαν εἰς πολλὰ διαιρείτω, μηδὲ εἰς πολλὰ τεμνέτω. μᾶλλον δὲ μὴ πολλὰς ἐκ μιᾶς ποιείτω. Ὥσπερ γὰρ ἀληθεια μία, οὕτω δὲ καὶ φιλοσοφία. *Quocirca philoſophiam nobis plures in partes nemo dividat: vel potius plures ex una non faciat. Ut enim veritas una eſt; ita et philoſophia* But, obſerves the emperor, it may be objected, in the firſt place, that there are a multitude of different ſects. Theſe ſects however, he replies, are merely different modes of coming at the truth, and ought to be conſidered in no other light than as different routs by which men may travel towards the ſame place. For as thoſe who deſign to go to Athens, are by no means reſtricted to one particular road, but are at libery to adopt different courſes by ſea as well as by land; ſo they who are in queſt of the truth may purſue different modes of arriving at it. But it may be objected, ſecondly, he remarks, that of thoſe who have adopted theſe different modes many have wandered out of the way and loſt themſelves. His anſwer is, that this is very true; but let any one only be at the pains of aſcertaining the courſes chalked out by the reſpective parents or founders of theſe ſects, and he will find them all conſiſtent and tending to the ſame end, πρωτίυσαντας δὲ ἐν τῇ ἑκάστῃ τῶν αἱρέσεων σκοπείτω καὶ πάντα εὑρήσει σύμφωνα. *Unius cujusque ſectæ principes aſpiciat ille, et quam ſint omnia conſentanea cognoſcet.* This was the very principle adopted by Ammonius, whoſe wiſh it was to bring all the good and wiſe of all nations under one and the ſame rule and diſcipline. The followers of Ariſtotle and of Plato, ſaid he, may

heatheniſm, and prevailing on all the wiſe and good men of every nation to lay aſide their contentions and quarrels, and unite together as one large family, the children of one common mother. With a view to the accompliſhment of this end therefore he maintained, that divine wiſdom had been firſt brought to light and nurtured amongſt the people of the eaſt by Hermes Triſmegiſtus, Zoroaſter, and other great and ſacred characters [o]; that it was warmly eſpouſed

CENT. II.

The philoſophy of Ammonius.

may indeed differ and fall out, as may alſo the philoſophers of Greece and the barbarous nations, but let any one go back to the firſt origin of the different ſects, and he will find them all conſentaneous.

[o] It is plain from the writings of Plotinus, Proclus, Simplicius, Damaſcius, and others of the Ammonian ſchool, whoſe works have come down to our times in ſufficient number, that this ſect referred the origin of all wiſdom to the eaſt, and were ever fond of citing as authorities the writings of Hermes, the oracles of Zoroaſter, the verſes of Orpheus, and I know not what other reliques of the ancient philoſophers of Egypt and the eaſt. Nor do I think it by any means an improbable conjecture of ſome of the learned, that the writings of Hermes now extant, as well as the magic oracles, which are for the moſt part attributed to Zoroaſter, were in fact the productions of the more recent Platonic ſchool. Of the very great partiality entertained by this ſect for the ancient philoſophy of the Aſſyrians and Egyptians, which they contended was in every reſpect conſentaneous to their own ſyſtem of diſcipline, there is, amongſt others, a notable teſtimony extant in the well-known work of Jamblicus *de Myſteriis Ægyptiorum*, the author of which in lib. i. cap. i. ii. unequivocally intimates that Pythagoras and Plato fought their philoſophy from Egypt; and, to uſe his very words, *antiquas Mercurii columnas lectitantes philoſophiam inde conſtituiſſe*. The ſame author, as is obſerved by Gale in his annotations, p. 184. although he makes Hermes the parent of all wiſdom, yet, in no very obſcure terms admits that even before his time, the Chaldeans had been in the habit of philoſophiſing. That Ammo-

CENT. II. eſpouſed and cheriſhed by Pythagoras and Plato amongſt the Greeks [p]; from whom, although the other Grecian ſages might appear to have diſſented,

The philoſophy of Ammonius.

nius himſelf not only inſtilled into the minds of his followers a veneration for this barbarous philoſophy, as it was termed, but alſo placed the fountain of all wiſdom in Upper Aſia, in Chaldea, Perſia, and India, is plain from what has been handed down to us by Porphyry in his Life of that eminent diſciple of the Ammonian ſchool, Plotinus, cap. iii. p. 96, 97. edit. Fabrician, vol. iv. *Biblioth. Græc.* For he ſtates him to have attained to ſuch a degree of proficiency under Ammonius that he even came to the determination of further proſecuting his ſtudies amongſt the magi of Perſia and India, and intended to have gone thither with the army of the emperor Gordian; Συνέχως τῷ Ἀμμωνίῳ παρεμένοντα, τοσαύτην ἕξιν ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ κτήσασθαι, ὡς καὶ τὴν παρὰ τοῖς Πέρσαις ἐπιτηδευομένην, πεῖραν λαβεῖν πῦσαι καὶ τοῖς παρ' Ινδοῖς κατορθαμένην. *Sedulus audivit* (for eleven years) *Ammonium, tantumque in philoſophia profecit, ut philoſophiæ inſuper in qua Perſæ ſe exercebant facere periculum affectaverit, atque etiam ſapientiam precipue apud Indos probatam proſequi conſtituerit.* Plotinus could certainly never have imbibed this anxious deſire to acquaint himſelf with the maxims and tenets of the Perſians and Indians, had he not heard his maſter extol them and declare that philoſophy had been communicated to Egypt from the eaſt. Hence too it was, that when thoſe degenerate Chriſtians, who are diſtinguiſhed by the title of Gnoſtics, brought forward what they termed the oracles and writings of Zoroaſter, Zoſtrian, and others of the eaſtern magi, with a view of proving that their own principles were ſtrictly in uniſon with the ancient philoſophy of the eaſt, Plotinus, Porphyry, and others of the Ammonian ſchool, immediately made it their buſineſs to deſtroy the credibility of theſe writings, by ſhewing that they were not the productions of thoſe illuſtrious characters to whom they were aſcribed, as the reader will find related at length by Porphyry in his *Life of Plotinus*, cap. xvi. p. 118, 119. For unqueſtionably theſe latter would never have troubled themſelves to do this, had they not earneſtly wiſhed to have it generally believed that their own doctrine was the ſame with that wiſdom which Zoroaſter and other philoſophers of the eaſt had drawn from above, and communicated to mankind.

[p] Ammonius was evidently deſirous of being thought a Platoniſt, and the title of Platoniſts was the denomination aſſumed

CENT. II.

The philoſophy of Ammonius.

diſſented, yet that with nothing more than the exerciſe of an ordinary degree of judgment and attention, it was very poſſible to make this diſcordance entirely vaniſh, and ſhew that the only points on which theſe eminent characters diſagreed were but of trifling moment, and that it was chiefly in their manner of expreſſing their ſentiments that they varied [q]. The religion of the multitude, he alſo contended, went hand

aſſumed by the whole body of his diſciples, as the reader may find proved from the teſtimony of ancient writers, by Brucker in his *Hiſtory of Philoſophy*, and by myſelf, in my diſſertation *de Eccleſia per recentiores Platonicos turbata.* It may, indeed, at firſt appear ſomewhat ſtrange that men who imagined Plato to have learnt his philoſophy from the Egyptians, and the Egyptians themſelves to have been indebted for their diſcipline to the people of the eaſt, ſhould have choſen to denominate themſelves after the Grecian philoſopher. Why not term themſelves the diſciples of Hermes, or Zoroaſter, whom they reverenced as the very parents of philoſophy? Our wonder, however, muſt ceaſe when it is conſidered that Ammonius was of Grecian origin, that his auditors were Greeks, and that it was, moreover, the object of his diſciples to acquire credit and obtain for themſelves a reputation amongſt the Greeks. From the Egyptians they, of courſe, had nothing to expect, inaſmuch as theſe were always accuſtomed to look for inſtruction to the prieſts and wiſe men of their own nation, not to Greeks: but the Greeks, attached beyond meaſure to every thing of their own, held, as is well known, the philoſophy of what they termed barbarous nations in the moſt ſovereign contempt. It being a primary object, then, with Ammonius and his diſciples to conciliate the favour of the Greeks, they were under the neceſſity of ſelecting for a patron ſome one or other of thoſe whom the Greeks regarded as philoſophers; and amongſt theſe they could find none whom they could adopt as ſuch with greater propriety and convenience than Plato.

[q] The ſcheme thus entertained by Ammonius of doing away all diſſenſions amongſt philoſophers, and making it appear that all the ancient ſects, particularly the Platonic and the Ariſtotelian, were agreed as to every

CENT. II.

The philoſophy of Ammonius.

hand in hand with philoſophy, and with her had ſhared the fate of being by degrees corrupted and obſcured with mere human conceits, ſuperſtition, and lies: that it ought therefore to be brought back to its original purity, by purging it of this droſs, and expounding it upon philoſophical principles: and that the whole which Chriſt had in view by coming into the world, was — to reinſtate and reſtore to its primitive integrity, the wiſdom of the ancients, — to reduce within bounds the univerſally prevailing dominion of ſuperſtition, — and in part to correct, and in part to exterminate, the various errors that had found their way into the different popular religions. This great deſign of bringing about an union of all ſects and religions, the offspring of a mind certainly not deſtitute of genius, but diſtracted by fanaticiſm, and ſcarcely at all under the dominion of reaſon, required, in order to its execution, not only that the moſt ſtrained and unprincipled interpretations ſhould be given to ancient ſentiments, maxims, documents, and narratives, but alſo that the aſſiſtance of frauds and fallacies ſhould be called in: hence we find the works which the diſciples of Ammonius left behind them abounding in things of this kind; ſo much ſo indeed, that it is impoſſible for them ever to be viewed in any other light than as deplorable monuments of wiſdom run mad.

thing of moment, is diſtinctly unfolded by that illuſtrious diſciple of the Ammonian ſchool, Hierocles: (*Lib. de Fato* apud *Phot. Biblioth.* cod. ccxiv. & cod. cccli. p. 283. & 730.) and whatever writings we have extant of any of his followers, concur in placing this matter out of all controverſy.

XXIX. But

CENT. II.

The theoretical or ſpeculative philoſophy of Ammonius.

XXIX. But to deſcend more into particulars. Ammonius in the firſt place adopted the ancient and generally received principles of the Egyptians reſpecting the Deity, the world, the ſoul, providence, the power of dæmons, and the like. Agreeably, for inſtance, to what we well know to have been the doctrine maintained by the Egyptian philoſophers of old, he contended that every thing was a conſtituent part of one great whole [r]: that the Deity could be ſevered from this univerſe only in imagi-

[r] That the whole ſyſtem of the Ammonian philoſophy was built on that diſcipline which was profeſſed by the Egyptian prieſts, and which they made it their boaſt to have derived from Hermes, is to be proved, as well from a variety of other things, as in particular from this, that the very ſame dogma on which all the wiſdom of the Egyptians reſted for ſupport, conſtituted alſo the leading principle of the Ammonian ſchool, from whence all its other maxims and tenets took their riſe, *viz.* that all things are from God, all things are in God, and all things are one; God and the univerſe conſtitute one whole, nor can they be ſeparated except in imagination. Thoſe who are converſant in the antiquities of Egypt well know, that this dogma comprehends the whole of the ſecret wiſdom of that nation. The reader will find this treated of at much length by the author of that diſcourſe *de Natura Deorum*, which is attributed to Hermes Triſmegiſtus, and which, from its being generally thought to have been tranſlated into Latin by Apuleius, is commonly printed amongſt the works of this latter author. He will find alſo the other principles which we have here ennumerated, there adverted to. See moreover Euſeb. *Preparat. Evangel.* lib. iii. cap. ix. as alſo what is remarked by Cudworth in his *Intellectual Syſtem*, tom. i. p. 404. & ſeq. And that this ſame leading principle was moſt warmly eſpouſed by Plotinus, Proclus, Simplicius, Jamblicus, and the whole herd of the Modern Platoniſts, is beyond a doubt; for what other than this do they ſay when they aſſert the world to be coupled with God and from all eternity to have emanated from God? Only let us attend to the prayer of Plotinus, the moſt famous of the diſciples of Ammonius, offered up when he was dying, as recorded by

CENT. II.

The theoretical or ſpeculative philoſophy of Ammonius.

imagination, or, which is the ſame thing, that this world had flowed from all eternity from the Deity: which is in fact aſſigning to the world an exiſtence of equal duration with that of the Deity, although of a different kind; that all minds were equal in point of nature, but of very different degrees: that they were all, without exception, the offspring of the divine eſſence, and had therefore formerly all partaken of a ſtate of bliſs in the regions above: that moſt minds of the inferior order being ſtimulated by a deſire to enjoy thoſe pleaſures which were to be derived to the ſenſes from an alliance with matter, had deſcended into terreſtrial bodies [s]: that every man therefore, in addition to a ſenſitive and mutable ſoul derived from the ſoul of the univerſe, poſſeſſes incloſed within his mortal frame, a mind unchangeable and nearly related to the Deity himſelf; and that hence it is the duty of a wiſe man to aſcend in ſpirit to the parent of all things, and to ſtrive by every means in his power to hold communion with him. From minds of the higher order, or, as they were termed, dæmons, the Deity had, he aſſerted, given to the different nations of the earth ſuperintendants and

by his ſcholar Porphyry in the hiſtory of his life, cap. ii. p. 94. Μέλλων δὲ τελευτᾶν - - - - ἐιπων ὁτι σὲ ἔτι περιμένω καὶ Φάσας πεφᾶσθαι τὸν ἐν ημῖν θεὸν ἀνάγειν πρὸς τὸ ἐν τῶ παντὶ θεῖον. *Quum vero morti appropinquaret - - - - - adhuc te, inquit, expecto, atque equidem jam annitor, quod in nobis divinum eſt ad divinun ipſum quod viget in univerſo redigere.*

[s] Hence we may account for what Porphyry ſays of Plotinus appearing to be, as it were, aſhamed of the connection of his ſoul with the body; ἐώκει μὲν ἀισχυνομένω ὅτι ἐν σώματι εἴη, *pudore quodam affici videbatur, quod anima ejus in corpore eſſet.* Vit. Plotin. cap. i. p. 91. where obſerve what Fabricius has remarked on this paſſage.

guardians

CENT. II.

guardians, and to the different departments of nature governors and directors. Certain of theſe, diſtinguiſhed beyond the reſt for their virtue and power, he conſidered as preſiding over the ſun, the moon, the planets, and the other ſtars; whilſt of the remainder, to whom was entruſted the care of inferior and terrene things, many were actuated by vicious propenſities, and ſome were ſo completely deſtitute of every virtuous and dignified principle, as even to rejoice over others ills, and burn, as it were, with the luſt of doing harm. His next care was to incorporate theſe principles with the Platonic diſcipline, a taſk of but little labour, inaſmuch as, with the exception of but a few things, the tenets of Ammonius and thoſe of the Athenian ſage, were not diſtinguiſhed from each other by any very material ſhades of difference [*t*]. In the laſt place he exerted every poſſible ingenuity

The theoretical or ſpeculative philoſophy of Ammonius.

[*t*] The diſcipline of Plato differs in many reſpects from the wiſdom of the Egyptians; in not a few things however the congruity between them is abſolute and perfect. To incorporate the one with the other, therefore, could not be a work of much labour. Reſpecting that dogma which we have ſeen to be, as it were, the chief and corner-ſtone of the Egyptian and Ammonian philoſophy, namely, that of the Deity and this univerſe conſtituting one great whole, there is no ſort of accordance whatever between the ſyſtem of Plato and that of the Egyptians. For Plato, as is proved beyond all controverſy by his *Timæus*, although he maintained that the matter of this world is eternal, yet drew a diſtinction between it and God, and conceived that it was with the aſſent and by the will of the Deity that it had at ſome period been digeſted and reduced into form. In the hope therefore of being able to do away this diſcrepance between the Egyptian and Platonic ſyſtems of diſcipline, the followers of Ammonius have exerted their abilities to the utmoſt, and have turned and twiſted the *Timæus* of Plato in every poſſible way with a view to conceal its repug-

CENT. II. genuity and addreſs in giving to the dogmas of the remaining ſects, nay even to the fables of the ancient poets, and the hiſtory of the heathen deities, that kind of interpretation which made them appear in perfect uniſon with his ſyſtem; and whenever he met with any thing in either of theſe that could by no means be brought to harmoniſe therewith, he rejected it as totally unfounded in reaſon [*u*].

The moral philoſophy of Ammonius.

XXX. With this ſyſtem of theoretical or ſpeculative philoſophy, which its author, a man of powerful talents, defended with no little portion of ſubtilty and addreſs, was conjoined a courſe of moral diſcipline in the higheſt degree rigid and auſtere. On ſuch people indeed as were neceſſarily involved in the cares and concerns of this life, Ammonius did not impoſe precepts of much difficulty in the obſervance, but ſuf-

repugnance to their own tenets reſpecting the eternity of the world. But with all their pains they have done nothing, except it be to prove that with them the ancient dogmas of the Egyptians poſſeſſed more weight and were held in greater eſteem than the authority of Plato. As a fair ſpecimen of the whole we refer the reader to the commentary of Proclus on the *Timæus* of Plato.

[*u*] This attempt to unite the principles of every other ſect and religion with thoſe of the Egyptians, is the grand feature that diſtinguiſhes this new philoſophy from the Eclectic ſyſtem, which flouriſhed at Alexandria prior to the time of Ammonius. The Eclectics ſought out and adopted from every ſect all ſuch things as appeared to them to make any near approach to the truth, and rejected what they conſidered as having little or no foundation in reaſon; but Ammonius, conceiving that not only the philoſophers of Greece, but alſo all thoſe of the different barbarous nations, were perfectly in uniſon with each other with regard to every eſſential point, made it his buſineſs ſo to temper and expound the tenets of all theſe various ſects as to make it appear that they had all of them originated from one and the ſame ſource, and all tended to one and the ſame end.

fered

fered them to live agreeably to the laws of nature and thoſe of their country; but every one who laid claim to the character of a wiſe man was ſtrictly enjoined by him to aſſert the liberty of his divine and immortal part, by extricating it, as it were, from all connection with the body; the conſequence of which would be, that it would, even in this life, enjoy a communion with the Deity, and when death ſhould diſencumber it of every groſs and corporeal tie, eſcape free and unpolluted into the arms of the firſt great parent of all things. With this view he willed all ſuch to lead a life reſembling that to which Plato gives the denomination of *Orphic* [*v*]; to abſtain from wine, fleſh, and every kind of food which might tend to invigorate or refreſh the body; to decline marriage, to court ſolitude, to abſtract the mind from the ſenſes and call it off from viſible objects, to ſtrive by means of contemplation to ſubdue the impulſes and powers of the ſenſitive ſoul; in fine, to ſhrink from no exertion that might tend to free the immortal ſpirit from all corporeal influence, and reſtore it to a participation of the divine nature [*w*]. Theſe obligations, to which, according

CENT. II.

The moral philoſophy of Ammonius.

[*v*] Plato in lib. vi. *de Legibus*, p. 626. ed. Ficin. in treating of mankind during the primæval ages, obſerves, amongſt other things, Σαρκῶν δ' ἀπείχοντο. Ὡς ἔχ ὁσιον ὂν ἐσθίειν, ἀ δὲ τὰς τῶν θεῶν βωμὰς αἱματι μιαίνειν. ἀλλὰ Ὀρφικοί τινες λεγόμενοι βίοι ἐγίγνοντο ἡμῶν τοῖς τότε, ἀψύχων μὲν ἐχόμενοι πάντων, ἐμψύχων δὲ τεναντίον πάντων ἀπεχόμενοι. *Carnibus vero abſtinebant. Nam veſci carnibus et Deorum aras polluere ſanguine impium videbatur. Ita Orphica quædam vita tunc vigebat. Inanimatis quippe omnibus veſcebantur et ab animatis omnibus abſtinebant.*

[*w*] More in the way of illuſtration, as to what we have here ſtated, is to be gathered from Porphyry alone in his work περὶ ἀποχῆς, or concerning abſtinence from fleſh, than from all the reſt of the Ammonian ſect of his time put together. For, although he abounds in ſubtilty, he yet ſurpaſſes,

CENT. II.

The moral philoſophy of Ammonius.

according to the Ammonian ſcheme, every wiſe man was ſubject, its author, as was natural for one that had been born and educated and conſtantly lived amongſt Chriſtians, was accuſtomed to expound and recommend in a language and phraſeology evidently borrowed from the Chriſtian diſcipline, a practice of which many very ſtriking inſtances alſo occur in ſuch of the writings of his followers as are extant among us at this day [*x*]. In addition to this rigid ſyſtem of diſcipline, the offspring of the peculiar tenets

paſſes, in point of perſpicuity, every other of the Modern Platoniſts, and treats not only of abſtinence, but likewiſe of thoſe other duties which he conſidered as attaching themſelves to the character of a wiſe man. Vid. lib. i. § xxvii. et ſeq. p. 22—34.

[*x*] It has been obſerved long ſince by men of learning, that the writings of the Modern Platoniſts, ſuch as Hierocles on the golden verſes of Pythagoras, Simplicius, Jamblicus, and others, are replete with Chriſtian phraſes and expreſſions; and their concluſion has been, that theſe things were pilfered out of the ſacred writings, and thus applied by the followers of Ammonius from an anxious deſire to recommend their diſcipline by rendering it apparently conſiſtent with the doctrines of Chriſtianity. With regard to this, the reader may conſult a diſſertation of mine *de Studio Ethnicorum Chriſtianos imitandi*, which is to be found amongſt my other diſſertations relating to eccleſiaſtical hiſtory. But there is certainly no occaſion for our imputing to thoſe men any thing like a wicked or fraudulent intention. For who, let me aſk, can feel any conſiderable degree of ſurpriſe at finding a ſyſtem of philoſophy which originated with a man like Ammonius, apparently a Chriſtian, unfolded with a certain colouring of Chriſtianity, and explained in terms of common uſe amongſt Chriſtians? The ſacred writings of the Chriſtians muſt have been familiar to Ammonius, even from his tender years, and his ears muſt have been well accuſtomed to their peculiar forms of ſpeech. Beſides it is certain, that either with an artful view or from a downright error in judgment, he encouraged the opinion that there was no difference whatever, at leaſt none of any moment, between the ſyſtem of diſcipline which he himſelf ſought to eſtabliſh as the true one, and that which had been propounded

nets entertained by him reſpecting God and the human ſoul, Ammonius propounded to his followers an art fraught with leſs important benefits, and ſuited only to capacities of a refined and an exalted nature, which he termed *Theurgia*, and for which there can be no doubt but that he was indebted to the Egyptian prieſts. This art embraced the faculty of ſo conſecrating and purifying by certain ſecret rites that part of the mind or ſoul which receives the images of corporeal things, as to render it capable of perceiving dæmons, and alſo of holding an intercourſe with ſpirits or angels, and of performing, with their aſſiſtance, things admirable in themſelves and utterly beyond the powers of human nature alone to accompliſh. This ſpecies of magic was not cultivated by all the philoſophers of the Modern Platonic ſchool, but only by thoſe of the higher order, who aſpired to a ſort of ſuperiority over the reſt. In fact an acquaintance with it was conſidered rather as ornamental than uſeful, and as by no means neceſſary in attaining to the chief good [y].

CENT. II.

The moral philoſophy of Ammonius.

XXXI. In

propounded by Chriſt. Wherefore he made no ſcruple, when diſcourſing on the neceſſity of purifying the ſoul and bringing it back to God, or in defining the nature of true virtue, to make uſe of Chriſtian terms and phraſes, and whatever things of this kind came from his mouth were, no doubt, treaſured up with a ſort of reverence by his diſciples, and ſoon communicated throughout the whole ſect.

[y] The ridiculous and empty ſpecies of ſcience ſo celebrated amongſt the Modern Platoniſts under the name of *Theurgia*, bore a very near reſemblance to that kind of magic which was termed good or lawful, in oppoſition to the black or illicit magic, and was, indiſputably, of Egyptian origin. Nothing indeed could be more eaſy than for the Egyptians, who believed that the univerſe was filled with good and evil dæmons, to fall into the error of imagining that there was an art, by means of which the good will of theſe dæmons might

CENT. II.

XXXI. In order that the different popular religions by which a plurality of Gods was recognized,

The ſentiments of Ammonius reſpecting the different popular religions.

might be obtained. The nature of this ſcience is ſufficiently explained by Auguſtine *de Civitate Dei*, lib. x. cap ix. p. 107. tom vii. opp. *Theurgiam*, ſays he, *Porphyrius utilem eſſe dicit mundandæ parti animæ, non quidem intellectuali, qua rerum intelligibilium percipitur veritas nullas habentium ſimilitudines corporum, ſed ſpiritali, qua corporalium rerum capiuntur imagines. Hanc enim dicit per quaſdam conſecrationes Theurgicas, quas teletas vocant, idoneam fieri atque aptam ſuſceptioni ſpirituum et angelorum et ad videndos Deos.* The rational ſoul derived no benefit whatever from this ſcience, and it was therefore very poſſible for any one to be happy and bleſſed without underſtanding any thing of it; hence we may perceive the reaſon of its not being cultivated by the whole body of the Platoniſts. *Ex quibus tamen*, continues Auguſtine, *Theurgicis teletis fatetur intellectuali animæ nihil purgationis accedere, quod eam faciat idoneam ad videndum Deum ſuum, perſpicienda ea quæ vere ſunt* (*viz.* τὰ ὄντα). ——— *Denique animam rationalem* —— *in ſuperna poſſe dicit evadere, etiamſi quod ejus ſpiritale eſt, nulla Theurgica arte fuerit purgatum: porro autem a Theurgo ſpiritalem purgari hactenus, ut non ex hoc ad immortalitatem, æternitatemque perveniat.* Theſe few ſentences certainly offer a long and extenſive field for comment in the way of illuſtration; at preſent however I ſhall ſtudy to be brief. According to the Modern Platoniſts man is poſſeſſed of a twofold ſoul; the one rational and generated of the Deity, the other ſenſitive and capable of being impreſſed with the images of mundane things, and derived from the ſoul of the corporeal world. The former of a nature imperiſhable and immortal, the latter extinguiſhable and of merely finite duration. Each, during its continuance in the body, is inert, and devoid of light, but may, to a certain degree, be illuminated, quickened and refined. The means by which the rational ſoul may be gradually purified and illuminated are contemplation, the practice of virtue, conſtant exercitation, abſtinence, and extenuation of the body. When properly purified, it is capable, without the aſſiſtance of eyes, of ſeeing the Deity himſelf, and all thoſe things which have a true and real exiſtence, and becomes united with God by the cloſeſt and moſt indiſſoluble of ties. The ſenſitive ſoul is purified by means of certain natural remedies well known to thoſe who are proficients in the ſcience termed *Theurgia*; for being generated of matter, by matter alone can it be affected, even as corrupt

cognized, might not appear repugnant to his doctrine, Ammonius endeavoured to reduce the whole hiſtory of the heathen deities, as it had been handed down by the poets and inculcated by the prieſts, to ſomewhat of a rational ſyſtem, and contended that it was altogether an allegorical exhibition of either natural or moral precepts and maxims [z]. Conformably to the Chriſtian faith, he maintained that there was one God, from whom all things had proceeded. The hoſt of beings whom the multitude and the heathen prieſthood commonly honoured with the name of gods, he would not allow to be actually gods, but merely the miniſters of God,

CENT. II.

The ſentiments of Ammonius reſpecting the different popular religions.

rupt bodies are to be amended by contrivance and art with the aſſiſtance of ſuch powers as are contained in herbs, precious ſtones, and various other things. Being thus cleanſed of its impurities, this kind of ſoul becomes capable of perceiving dæmons and angels, and of maintaining a familiar intercourſe with them. Nor is this at all to be wondered at: for the dæmons, according to the Ammonian ſcheme, are clothed with bodies of a ſlender and refined texture, which are inviſible to mankind whilſt the ſenſes remain in a dull, corrupt ſtate, but become apparent and viſible when once thoſe things are removed by which the faculties are clogged and rendered inert. For the ſame reaſon the celeſtial and rational ſoul, notwithſtanding that it may have been purified from all contagion of the body and the ſenſes, and entirely cleanſed from every thing vicious and corrupt, can never arrive at any knowledge of, or intercourſe with dæmons. For it poſſeſſes not the faculty of perceiving ſenſible things, and is therefore incapable of diſcerning ſuch natures as are joined to bodies, although thoſe bodies may be of a ſubtile and refined order, but erecting itſelf above every thing corporeal, it arrives by inexplicable means at a knowledge and intimate connection with its firſt great parent.

[z] The whole Ammonian ſchool was devoted to allegory, and converted the hiſtory of the heathen gods into a ſort of philoſophy. As a ſpecimen, we refer the reader to Porphyrius *de Antro Nympharum apud Homer. de Styge*, and others of his ſmaller pieces.

or

CENT. II.

The ſentiments of Ammonius reſpecting the different popular religions.

or dæmons, to whom the ſupreme governor of the univerſe had committed the ſuperintendance and guardianſhip of nations, or the direction of certain parts of nature, or finally the adminiſtration and guidance of human affairs and actions [*a*]. To theſe agents of divine providence he thought it reaſonable that a certain ſort of honour and worſhip ſhould be paid: juſt as amongſt men a certain degree of attention and reſpect is ſhewn to the legates of kings, and inferior magiſtrates; but he by no means deemed it neceſſary that they ſhould be addreſſed with the ſame ceremonies that were uſed in worſhipping the Deity, much leſs that they ſhould be conciliated or appeaſed with ſacrifices and the blood of animals. According to him, none but natures that were inimical to the human race, and that delighted in ſenſuality, could find any gratification in the death and blood of animals. The offerings in which ſuch natures as reſembled and were allied to the Supreme Deity took pleaſure were frankincenſe, hymns, herbs, and things altogether innoxious. It was no other than fitting, he conceived, that prayers ſhould be addreſſed to theſe agents of the

[*a*] Paulus Oroſius, *Hiſtoriar.* lib. vi. cap. i. p. 364, 365. *Quidam dum in multis Deum credunt, multos Deos indiſcreto timore finxerunt. Sed hinc jam vel maxime, cum auctoritate veritatis* (that is, the Chriſtian religion) *operante, tum ipſa etiam ratione diſcutiente, diſceſſum eſt. Quippe cum et philoſophi eorum —— —— dum intento mentis ſtudio quærunt, ſcrutanturque omnia, unum Deum auctorem omnium repererunt, ad quem unum omnia referrentur; unde etiam nunc pagani, quos jam declarata veritas* (*i. e.* the Chriſtian religion) *de contumacia magis, quam de ignorantia, convincit, cum a nobis diſcutiuntur, non ſe plures Deos ſequi, ſed ſub uno Deo magno plures miniſtros venerari fatentur.*

Deity,

Deity, inaſmuch as to them was committed the diſpenſation of God's benefits and bleſſings, but that prayers of this kind were to be regulated by reaſon and wiſdom, ſince the good things that were placed at the diſpoſal of theſe dæmons were thoſe which concerned merely the welfare of the body, not ſuch as might benefit the celeſtial and immortal ſpirit. It became therefore a wiſe man, he held, whoſe main object ought to be to improve the excellence and felicity of his mind, for the moſt part to paſs by theſe inferior deities, and prefer his petitions at once to the Supreme Being. CENT. II.

XXXII. With a view to render Chriſtianity apparently conſiſtent with his new philoſophy and the ancient religion, Ammonius admitted that Chriſt was a great and wiſe character, full of the counſel and power of the Deity, an admirable *Theurgiſt*, and a friend to the dæmons: that the diſcipline which he had inſtituted was of a moſt holy nature, and had been confirmed by miracles and preternatural ſigns: but he denied that Chriſt had ever taught any thing repugnant to the principles which he himſelf ſought to eſtabliſh, or that he had endeavoured to aboliſh the ancient popular religious rites and the worſhip of the dæmons that had been appointed by the Deity to preſide over nations and the different departments of nature [*b*]. And that he might the more readily procure for this part of his ſyſtem The tenets of Ammonius reſpecting Chriſt.

[*b*] The reader will underſtand me as not meaning to deny that amongſt thoſe who adopted the Ammonian diſcipline, there were ſome that were alike inimical to Chriſt and to the Chriſtians. We have an illuſtrious inſtance

CENT. II. ſyſtem an acceptance with the world, he endeavoured as far as poſſible, by means of ſtrained inter-

The tenets of Ammonius reſpecting Chriſt.

ſtance of this in the emperor Julian, and other examples might eaſily be adduced from amongſt the Platoniſts of that age. For the hatred which theſe perſons bore to Chriſt and his followers, particular reaſons might be aſſigned, which thoſe who are verſed in matters of antiquity will be at no loſs in diſcovering: but that Ammonius himſelf conſidered Chriſt as entitled to the higheſt honour, and that his true followers, although they were the authors of moſt grievous injuries to the Chriſtians, yet manifeſted a reſpect and eſteem for the character of Chriſt himſelf, is placed beyond a doubt by a variety of teſtimonies. Propriety could not allow that a man who made it his object to bring about an union of all ſects and religions, and maintained that Chriſt had come for the expreſs purpoſe of reinſtating the true and moſt ancient philoſophy and religion of the human race, ſhould either think or ſpeak otherwiſe than honourably of this ſame Chriſt. Neither is it at all probable that the veneration for Chriſt, which he had imbibed, as it were, with his mother's milk, could eaſily have been renounced by a man who, in departing from the true and right faith, appears to have been influenced, not ſo much by a depraved and vicious diſpoſition, as by too great a partiality for the Egyptian philoſophy and the ardour of an exuberant imagination. The reader will probably not be diſpleaſed at my adducing ſome paſſages from ancient authors in ſupport of what I have thus advanced. Auguſtine enters much into diſpute with thoſe philoſophers of his time who profeſſed a reſpect and veneration for Chriſt, but maintained that the Chriſtians had not adhered to the principles of their maſter. Lib. i. *de Conſenſu Evangeliſtarum*, tom. iii. P. II. opp. cap. vi. § xi. p. 5. *Hoc dicunt*, ſays he, *illi vel maxime Pagani, qui Dominum ipſum Jeſum Chriſtum culpare aut blaſphemare non audent, eique tribuunt excellentiſſimam ſapientiam, ſed tamen tanquam homini: diſcipulos vero ejus, dicunt, magiſtro ſuo amplius tribuiſſe quam erat, ut eum Filium Dei dicerent, et Verbum Dei per quod facta ſunt omnia, et ipſum ac Deum patrem unum eſſe: ac ſi qua ſimilia ſunt in apoſtolicis literis, quibus eum cum Patre unum Deum colendum eſſe didicimus: honorandum enim tamquam ſapientiſſimum virum putant; colendum autem tamquam Deum negant.* Some little while after, § 14. cap. viii. p. 6.

interpretations, or rather perverſions, to enliſt on his ſide the tenets of the Chriſtians reſpecting

CENT. II.

The tenets of Ammonius reſpecting Chriſt.

p. 6. he gives us to underſtand what opinion they entertained reſpecting Chriſt's miracles, namely, that he was a Theurgiſt or magician of the firſt rank, and that he left behind him two books, compriſing the principles of the Theurgic or magic art. *Ita vero iſti deſipiunt, ut illis libris, quos eum* (Chriſt) *ſcripſiſſe exiſtimant, dicant contineri eas artes, quibus eum putant illa feciſſe miracula quorum fama ubique percrebuit: quod exiſtimando ſe ipſos produnt quid diligant et quid affectent.* Auguſtine adds that poſſibly books of this kind might have been written by ſome one under the name of Chriſt. Amidſt much other matter it is expreſsly intimated by Auguſtine that this reverence for Chriſt had been handed down to the philoſophers of his time by the Platoniſts, and particularly by that illuſtrious ſtar of the Ammonian ſchool, Porphyry. Cap. xv. p. 8. *Quid? Quod iſti vani Chriſti laudatores et Chriſtianæ religionis obliqui obtrectatores propterea non audent blaſphemare Chriſtum, quia quidam philoſophi eorum, ſicut in libris ſuis Porphyrius Siculus prodidit, conſuluerunt deos ſuos quid de Chriſto reſponderent, illi autem oraculis ſuis Chriſtum laudare compulſi ſunt.* —— *Ac per hoc iſti, ne contra deorum ſuorum reſponſa conentur, continent bloſphemias a Chriſto, et eas in diſcipulos ejus effundunt.* Concerning thoſe oracles by which the heathen deities are ſaid to have extolled the character of our Bleſſed Saviour, Auguſtine treats more at large in lib. xix. *de Civitate Dei*, cap. xxiii. p. 428. & ſeq. tom. vii. opp. from Porphyry's work *de Philoſophia ex Oraculis*. Amongſt other things he remarks, *Dicit etiam bona philoſophus iſte de Chriſto.* ——— *Denique tanquam mirabile aliquid atque incredibile prolaturus, præter opinionem, inquit, profecto quibuſdam videatur eſſe quod dicturi ſumus; Chriſtum enim dii piiſſimum pronuntiaverunt et immortalem factum, et cum bona prædicatione ejus meminerunt: Chriſtianos vero pollutos inquit, et contaminatos et errore implicatos eſſe dicunt, et multis talibus adverſus eos blaſphemiis utuntur.* The oracle itſelf, of which the ſenſe is thus given by Porphyry, I purpoſely omit. A Latin tranſlation of it is to be found in Auguſtine, but it is not a clear one. Euſebius gives it in Greek from the above-cited work of Porphyry in his *Demonſtratio Evangel.* lib. iii. cap. viii. p. 134. Another oracle, bearing in like manner honourable teſtimony to the character of Chriſt, namely, one delivered by

CENT II.

ing the Deity, the human ſoul, the world, the trinity of perſons in the Godhead, good and bad

The tenets of Ammonius reſpecting Chriſt.

the Mileſian Apollo, is to be met with in Lactantius *Inſtitut. Divinar.* lib. iv. cap. xiii. p. 446. Auguſtine conceives that theſe oracles were either the inventions of the enemies of Chriſtianity, or that they were delivered by dæmons for the purpoſe of ſeducing the Chriſtians from the true religion. *Quis ita ſtultus eſt ut non intelligat aut ab homine callido eoque Chriſtianis inimiciſſimo hæc oracula fuiſſe conficta, aut conſilio ſimili ab impuris dæmonibus iſta fuiſſe reſponſa; ut ſcilicet quoniam laudant Chriſtum propterea veraciter credantur vituperare Chriſtianos; atque ita, ſi poſſint, intercludant viam ſalutis æternæ, in qua ſit quiſque Chriſtianus.* To this opinion of Auguſtine, that theſe oracles were the inventions of the enemies of the Chriſtians, I very readily ſubſcribe. The philoſophers, the adverſaries of the Chriſtians, as Auguſtine expreſsly ſtates in the former-cited paſſage, conſulted the heathen deities reſpecting the character of Chriſt; and the prieſts of thoſe deities, without doubt, returned an anſwer conformably to what they knew to be the opinion of the perſons thus conſulting them. But it ſtrikes me, that theſe philoſophers were influenced by a different motive in procuring theſe oracles from that which ſuggeſted itſelf to Auguſtine. In fact, they had learnt from Ammonius, the founder of their ſect, that Chriſt was a character of the firſt eminence, and worthy of the higheſt praiſe; and this opinion they ſcrupled not openly to profeſs. To the numerous enemies of the Chriſtian religion, however, their conduct in this reſpect was highly offenſive, and particularly to the heathen prieſthood, who were apprehenſive that the praiſes thus beſtowed on Chriſt might injure the cauſe of Paganiſm, and would rather have had Chriſt blended with the Chriſtians in one indiſcriminate cenſure and malediction. The Platonic philoſophers, therefore, with a view to remove from themſelves every ſort of odium on this account, and to prove that the opinion which they maintained reſpecting Chriſt was one that might be juſtified, made enquiry of the gods as to what was to be thought of Chriſt's character: and having obtained an anſwer, ſuch as they deſired, no further room was left for cavil, inaſmuch as by producing theſe oracles they could at any time prove to demonſtration that the opinion of the gods was on their ſide. And who ſhould pretend to call men in queſtion for

bad angels, and the like, as well as their different maxims and precepts relating to piety and morals.

CENT. II.

The tenets of Ammonius reſpecting Chriſt.

for maintaining opinions that had received the ſanction of the gods? Let us now ſee what other ſentiments Auguſtine ſtates to have been entertained by theſe philoſophers reſpecting Chriſt and the Chriſtians. They denied that it had been Chriſt's intention to abrogate the worſhip of the heathen deities. *Veruntamen*, ſays he, *de Conſenſ. Evangeliſtar.* lib. i. cap. xvi. p. 8. *iſti ita diſputant, quod hæc everſio templorum, et damnatio ſacrificiorum, et confractio ſimulacrorum non per doctrinam Chriſti fiat, ſed per diſcipulorum ejus, quos aliud quam ab illo didicerunt, docuiſſe contendunt; ita volentes Chriſtianam fidem, Chriſtum honorantes laudantesque, convellere.* On the contrary they maintained, that Chriſt himſelf paid an honorary worſhip to theſe deities, and that it was by their, or in other words the dæmons', aſſiſtance he wrought his miracles, l. c. cap. xxxvi. p. 18. *Ita enim volunt et ipſum credi, neſcio quid aliud ſcripſiſſe, quod diligunt, nihilque ſenſiſſe contra deos ſuos, ſed eos potius magico ritu coluiſſe; et diſcipulos ejus non ſolum de illo fuiſſe mentitos, dicendo illum Deum, per quem facta ſunt omnia, cum aliud nihil quam homo fuerit, quamvis excellentiſſimæ ſapientiæ; verum etiam de diis eorum non hoc docuiſſe quod ab illo didiciſſent.* They were ready, however, to admit that Chriſt had aboliſhed the worſhip of certain dæmons of the inferior order, and had enjoined men to addreſs themſelves to the deities of heaven alone, and, more particularly to the Supreme Governor of all things. That ſuch was their opinion, Auguſtine proves by a notable paſſage from Porphyry, of which he gives us the following tranſlation into Latin in his work *de Civitate Dei*, lib. xix. cap. xxiii. § iv. p. 430. tom. vii. opp. *Sunt* (the reader will recollect that it is Porphyry who is ſpeaking) *ſpiritus terreni minimi loco quodam malorum dæmonum poteſtati ſubjecti. Ab his ſapientes Hebræorum quorum unus iſte etiam Jeſus fuit; ab his ergo Hebræi dæmonibus peſſimis et minoribus ſpiritibus vetabant religioſos et ipſis vacare prohibebant: venerari autem magis cæleſtes deos, amplius autem venerari Deum patrem. Hoc autem et dii præcipiunt, et in ſuperioribus oſtendimus, quemadmodum animum advertere ad Deum monent, et illum colere ubique imperant. Verum indocti et impiæ naturæ* (*i. e.* the Chriſtians) *quibus vere fatum non conceſſit a diis dona obtinere, neque habere Jovis immortalis notionem, non audientes et deos* (*i. e.* thoſe oracles which he had antecedently adduced) *et divinos viros*, (Ammonius, whom, it appears from the

CENT. II.

morals (*c*). Such points of the Chriſtian doctrine as it ſurpaſſed his ingenuity to render by any

The tenets of Ammonius reſpecting Chriſt.

the teſtimony of Hierocles *apud Phot. Biblioth.* p. 283. they were accuſtomed to ſtyle Θεοδίδακτος, Plotinus, whom in like manner they termed Θεῖος, and others who had been taught by theſe,) *deos quidem omnes recuſaverunt, prohibitos autem dæmones, et hos non odiſſe ſed revereri, Deum autem ſimulantes colere, ea ſola per quæ Deus adoratur, non agunt. Nam Deus quidem utpote omnium pater nullius indiget* (*i. e.* he delights not in ſacrifices and victims), *ſed nobis eſt bene cum eum per juſtitiam et caſtitatem aliaſque virtutes adoramus, ipſam vitam precem ad ipſum facientes per imitationem et inquiſitionem de ipſo. Inquiſitio enim purgat,* (by *inquiſitio* he here means contemplation, meditation, and the abſtraction of the mind from the ſenſes; a mind to which this kind of diſcipline had become familiar, was conſidered by the Modern Platoniſts as in the higheſt degree purified and cleanſed,) *imitatio deificat affectionem ad ipſum operando.* He (Porphyry) had ſaid a little before, *Anima* (of Chriſt) *aliis animabus fataliter dedit errore implicari. Propterea ergo diis exoſi* —— *ipſe vero* (Chriſt) *pius et in cælum ſicut pii conceſſit. Itaque hunc quidem non blaſphemabis, miſereberis autem hominum dementiam, ex eo in eis facile præcepſque periculum.* What we hear from Porphyry, that illuſtrious enemy of the Chriſtians, we may conſider ourſelves as hearing from Ammonius himſelf and his principal diſciple Plotinus. For as it is certain that what Plotinus taught he had derived from Ammonius, ſo may we be ſure that for whatever is to be gathered from Porphyry, he himſelf was indebted to Plotinus.

[*c*] That the Modern or Ammonian Platoniſts made it their object, in a certain degree, to reconcile the maxims of the Egyptian and ancient Platonic philoſophy with thoſe of Chriſtianity, muſt be plain to any one who ſhall conſider the way in which Plotinus expreſſes his opinion reſpecting the exiſtence of three principles or chief hypoſtaſes in one God; the manner in which all the philoſophers of this ſect ſpeak concerning dæmons and ſpirits, their tenets reſpecting the nature of God and the human ſoul, and the opinions they avowed reſpecting the world and its origin. Moſt aſſuredly nothing can be more apparent than that all theſe things are ſo treated of and explained by them as to make it appear that little or no difference exiſted between their ſyſtem of diſcipline and Chriſtianity. They borrow from the Chriſtians diſtinctions, words, phraſes, and

CENT. II.

any means ſubſervient to his purpoſe, he pronounced to be unauthoriſed additions that had been made to the ſyſtem of Chriſt, by ignorant and injudicious diſciples. The principal articles to which he thus took exception as interpolations, were thoſe which reſpected the divinity of Chriſt, the ſalvation obtained through him for the human race, the abandoning the worſhip of a plurality of gods and adoring the one only Supreme Being. None of theſe points, he contended, had ever been inculcated by Chriſt himſelf, nor had he forbidden the paying of an honorary worſhip to all dæmons indiſcriminately, but only to ſuch as were of an evil nature. When in the following age this matter was brought into diſpute, and the miracles of our Bleſſed Saviour were urged by the Chriſtians in proof both of his divinity and alſo of his having meant to explode the worſhip

The tenets of Ammonius reſpecting Chriſt.

and whatever elſe they can, and accommodate them all to their own way of thinking. Indeed ſo dexterous were they at this, that we find them, according as it might beſt ſuit their purpoſe, at one time corrupting and debaſing the Chriſtian tenets in order to make them accord with their own opinions, whilſt at another they, on the contrary, correct and amend their own principles ſo as to make them coincide with the maxims of Chriſtianity. Hence it came to paſs that the greater part of theſe Platoniſts, upon comparing the Chriſtian religion with the ſyſtem of Ammonius, were led to imagine that nothing could be more eaſy than a tranſition from the one to the other, and, to the great detriment of the Chriſtian cauſe, were induced to embrace Chriſtianity without feeling it neceſſary to abandon ſcarcely any of their former principles. A memorable paſſage as to this occurs in Auguſtine's book, *de Vera Religione*, cap. iv. § vii. p. 559. tom. i. opp. *Itaque ſi hanc vitam illi viri nobiſcum rurſus agere potuiſſent, viderent profecto, cujus auctoritate facilius conſuleretur hominibus, et paucis mutatis verbis et ſententiis Chriſtiani fierent, ſicut plerique recentiorum noſtrorumque temporum Platonici fecerunt.* See alſo his epiſtle to Dioſcorus, ep. lxviii. § xxi. & xxxiii. p. 255. 260. tom. ii. opp.

CENT. II.

Thetenets of Ammonius reſpecting Chriſt.

of dæmons, the philoſophers of the Ammonian ſchool maintained that ſeveral of the more eminent of the Pagan worſhippers, ſuch as Apollonius Tyanæus, Pythagoras, Euclid, Apuleius, and others, had immortalized their names by miracles equally great and ſplendid with thoſe which had been wrought by Chriſt [*d*].

XXXIII. When

[*d*] It appears clearly to have been the general practice of the Platoniſts of the third and fourth centuries, to compare our Bleſſed Saviour with Apollonius Tyanæus, Pythagoras, and other philoſophers who were renowned for their miracles; and that Philoſtratus wrote the life of Apollonius, Porphyry and Iamblicus that of Pythagoras, and other authors, moſt likely, thoſe of other wiſe men, expreſsly with a view to ſhew that, amongſt the worſhippers of the heathen deities, there had been men diſtinguiſhed for acts of a ſimilar nature with thoſe by which Chriſt had rendered himſelf illuſtrious. That ſuch was their object, the reader will find fully proved by Gothofred Olearius, in his notes on Philoſtratus, and by L. Kuſter in his annotations on Iamblicus and Porphyry's life of Pythagoras. Thoſe who undertook the idle and abſurd taſk of making this compariſon, found it neceſſary to detract much from the honour that is due to the Saviour of the world, but they did not make it their aim to deprive his character of every ſort of dignity and glory. Their object was merely to bring him down to a level with thoſe whom they deemed to have been the wiſeſt and beſt of mortals, and who bore an affinity to the immortal gods. The only things therefore for which they contended in this way were theſe two; Firſt, that the miracles of Chriſt do not afford any abſolute or poſitive proof of his divinity, as the Chriſtians maintained; inaſmuch as it could be ſhewn, that men, having no pretenſions to the rank of deities, had performed things of a ſimilarly wonderful nature; Secondly, that Chriſt could never have meant altogether to overturn and aboliſh the worſhip of dæmons, (*i. e.* the heathen deities,) or the ancient popular religions, ſince the moſt religious of the heathen worſhippers had diſtinguiſhed themſelves by miracles, even as he. Theſe very Lives, therefore, of the ancient philoſophers, and the compariſons therein drawn between them and Chriſt, moſt plainly prove that the ſect of Ammonius or that of the Modern

CENT. II.

Forced interpretation of the ſcriptures.

XXXIII. When once this paſſion for philoſophiſing had taken poſſeſſion of the minds of the Egyptian teachers and certain others, and been gradually diffuſed by them in various directions throughout the church, the holy and beautiful ſimplicity of early times very quickly diſappeared, and was followed by a moſt remarkable and diſaſtrous alteration in nearly the whole ſyſtem of Chriſtian diſcipline. This very important and deeply to be regretted change had its commencement in the century now under review, but it will be in the ſucceeding one that we ſhall have to mark its chief progreſs. One of the earlieſt evils that flowed from this immoderate attachment to philoſophy was the violence to which it gave riſe in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures. For whereas the Chriſtians had from a very early period imbibed the notion that under the words, laws, and facts, recorded in the ſacred volume, there is a latent ſenſe concealed, an opinion which they appear to have derived from the Jews [*e*], no ſooner did this paſſion for philoſophiſing take poſſeſſion of their

dern Platoniſts held the character of Chriſt in very great honour, although they vilified and would willingly have altogether extirpated the Chriſtians.

[*e*] In the writings of fathers, even of this century, expreſs notice is occaſionally taken of thoſe four ſenſes of Scripture to which the Chriſtian expoſitors were for ſo many ages accuſtomed to direct the attention of their readers, namely, the literal, the allegorical, the tropological, and the anagogical. The firſt three of theſe are noticed by Juſtin Martyr, (*Dial. cum Tryphone*, p. 333. edit. Jebbian.) who, after making ſome remarks as to the ſenſe attached to the words of the ſacred volume, adds, καὶ γὰρ ἐν παραβολῇ λίθον πολλαχοῦ καλῶν ἀπέδειξα τὸν Χριστὸν καὶ ἐν τροπολογίᾳ Ἰακὼβ καὶ Ἰσραήλ. *Nam per parabolam*, (that to which Juſtin here applies the term *Parable*

CENT. II.

Forced interpretation of the ſcriptures.

their minds, than they began with wonderful ſubtilty to preſs the Scriptures into their ſervice in ſupport of all ſuch principles and maxims as appeared to them conſonant to reaſon; and at the ſame time moſt wretchedly to pervert and twiſt every part of thoſe divine oracles which oppoſed itſelf to their philoſophical tenets or notions. The greateſt proficients in this pernicious practice were thoſe Egyptian teachers who firſt directed the attention of the Chriſtians towards philoſophy, namely, Pantænus and Clement. Their expoſitions of the Scriptures have not reached our days, but it appears from ſuch of the writings of Clement as are at preſent extant, that he and Pantænus are not to be conſidered as having ſtruck out an abſolutely original path in this reſpect, for that in reality they were merely followers

Parable is, by ſubſequent Chriſtian writers, denominated *Allegory* or the allegorical ſenſe,) *illum* (*i. e.* Iſaiah) *perſæpe Chriſtum vocare lapidem oſtendi, et tropologice Jacobum et Iſraelem.* Of the *anagogical* ſenſe, as they term it, whereby the ſcriptural accounts of things appertaining to this life are applied to ſpiritual and heavenly matters, many examples are to be met with likewiſe in Juſtin, and alſo in Clement. That the early Chriſtians derived this practice of annexing to the words of Scripture ſeveral different ſenſes, from the Jews, no one, at preſent, appears in the leaſt to doubt. It is moreover to be remarked that although Juſtin, Irenæus, and the other fathers of this century, whoſe writings have come down to our times, are continually obtruding on us myſtical and allegorical interpretations of the Scriptures, yet not one of them who dwelt without the confines of Egypt ever attempts by means of ingenuity to elicit from the ſacred writings any of the dogmas or maxims of philoſophy. By all of them the words of Scripture are made to refer to Chriſt and to heavenly things alone, although in a manner not altogether the moſt happy or judicious. This appears to me not a little extraordinary, and particularly in Juſtin Martyr, who certainly conſidered philoſophy as of divine origin.

of

of the celebrated Alexandrian Jew, Philo, whoſe writings they aſſiduouſly ſtudied, and whoſe empty wiſdom they were unhappily led to admire and to imitate [*f*]. CENT. II. Forced interpretation of the ſcriptures.

XXXIV. With

[*f*] Nearly all thoſe corruptions, by which, in the ſecond and ſubſequent centuries, Chriſtianity was disfigured, and its priſtine ſimplicity and innocence almoſt wholly effaced, had their origin in Egypt, and were thence communicated to the other churches. This province alſo gave birth to the diſcommendable practice of gloſſing over philoſophical opinions with the words of Scripture, or rather of ſtraining ſcriptural phraſes and expreſſions in ſupport of ſuch maxims as might appear to be dictated by reaſon. The firſt Chriſtians who made this art their ſtudy were Pantænus and Clement, ſucceſſively præfects of the catechetical ſchool of Alexandria; men of unqueſtionable worth and piety, but immoderately devoted to what they deemed the true philoſophy. It appears from St. Jerome, *Catal. Scriptor. Eccl.* cap. xxxvi. that many commentaries on the Holy Scriptures by Pantænus were formerly extant; but they have all long ſince fallen victims to the ravages of time. The manner, however, in which he expounded the ſacred writings may be collected from the works that are extant of his diſciple and ſucceſſor, Clement of Alexandria. One of his rules of interpretation, in particular, is preſerved by Clement in his *Eclogæ ex Scripturis Prophetarum*, ſubjoined to his works, § lvi. p. 1002. edit. Potterian. Pantænus, it there appears, laid it down as a maxim, that the prophets, in what they uttered, ſpake for the moſt part indefinitely, uſing the preſent tenſe at one and the ſame time both for the future and the præterite. Taking this rule of his preceptor for his guide in expounding the words of David, Pſal. xviii. 6. *Et in ſole poſuit tabernaculum ſuum*, Clement firſt of all aſſumes that they are to be underſtood as relating to Chriſt, and then goes on to expound the præterite *poſuit* as referring both to the paſt time and the future; and proceeding upon this plan, the words of David are found to admit, not merely of one, but ſeveral very extraordinary interpretations. Indeed it cannot fail to ſtrike every one, that this rule of Pantænus is every way calculated to admit of various different ſenſes being applied to almoſt every word of the ſacred volume: and there cannot be a doubt but that it was invented expreſsly with a view of introducing the utmoſt latitude of interpretation in the expoſi-

tion

CENT. II.

XXXIV. With this evil was connected another that proved equally detrimental to the intereſts

The practice ariſes of expounding Chriſtian tenets upon philoſophical principles.

The ſecret diſcipline.

tion of the Holy Scriptures, ſo as to admit of their being accommodated *ad libitum* to the occurrences of paſt as well as future times. Let us aſſume merely what Pantænus aſſumed, namely, that the words of Scripture relating to actions or occurrences do not refer to one particular time, but to ſeveral different periods; and it will be difficult to point out any part of the ſacred volume that may not be wonderfully dilated, and abſolutely loaded, as it were, with a variety of ſenſes or interpretations. Clement, the diſciple of Pantænus, was the author of a work of conſiderable length, to which he gave the title of *Hypotypoſes*, and in which he is ſaid to have given an expoſition of nearly all the ſacred writers one after another. He likewiſe wrote a commentary on what are termed the Canonical Epiſtles. Theſe works are loſt, but in ſuch of his writings as remain we meet with ſufficiently numerous examples of the manner in which he was accuſtomed to expound the Scriptures. To give an inſtance or two by way of illuſtration. In his *Stromata*, lib. i. cap. xxviii. p. 426. we find it aſſerted, that the Moſaic laws have a four-fold ſenſe; τετραχῶς δὲ ἡμῖν ἐκληπτέον τῷ νόμῳ τὴν βέλησιν. He however enumerates only three of thoſe ſenſes; the myſtical, the moral, and the prophetical. Every law, according to him, in the firſt place repreſents ſome ſign, that is, the words of the law are images of other things, and, in addition to their proper ſenſe, have an improper or ſecondary one alſo attached to them. Secondly, every law compriſes a precept for the right ordering of life. Thirdly, every law, like a prophecy, predicts ſomething future. As Clement enumerates only three ſenſes in which the law is to be underſtood, although he ſpeaks of four, Hervetus, his tranſlator into Latin, conjectures that in the word τετραχῶς there is a corruption, and that inſtead of it we ought to read τριχῶς. But the learned writer has, in this reſpect, fallen into an error. Clement in his enumeration paſſes over the natural ſenſe attached to the words of the law, as a thing too obvious to require pointing out, and particularizes merely the three leſs evident ones. For the inveſtigating theſe recondite ſenſes of the Moſaic law with effect, he deems philoſophy, or the dialectic art, an highly neceſſary auxiliary. Διαλεκτικώτερον δὲ προσιτέον αὐτῇ τὴν ἀκολουθίαν τῆς θείας διδασκαλίας ζηρωμένοις. *Eſt autem valde dialectice ad legem accedendum conſequentiam* (*i. e.* the recondite

reſts of Chriſtianity. For, not content with thus perverting and ſtraining the Holy Scriptures CENT. II.

The practice ariſes of expounding Chriſtian tenets upon philoſophical principles.

The ſecret diſcipline.

dite and abſtruſe ſenſes of the law,) *divinæ doctrinæ venantibus*. The tendency of theſe maxims, and how greatly they lean in favour of ſpecious and philoſophical explications of the law, muſt be manifeſt to every one. Clement alſo agrees with Philo Judæus in the opinion that the Greek philoſophers derived all their principles from Moſes. Vid. *Stromat.* lib. ii. cap. v. p. 439. Whatever therefore appears to him juſt and conſonant to reaſon in the māxims or tenets of the philoſophers, he is ſure to diſcover laid down ſomewhere or other in the books of the Old Teſtament; and this leads him, not unfrequently, to ſtrain and diſtort in a moſt extraordinary manner, the words of Moſes and the other ſacred writers, in order to make them, apparently, ſpeak one and the ſame language with Plato and the reſt of the philoſophers of Greece. One point which he, in particular, ſeeks to eſtabliſh is, that a Chriſtian ought to cultivate philoſophy and the liberal arts before he devotes himſelf wholly to the ſtudy of divine wiſdom. The reader will, in all probability, feel his curioſity ſomewhat awakened on learning that this is to be proved from the hiſtory of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar, as given by Moſes. Clement's manner of doing it is this: (*Stromat.* lib. i. p. 333.) Abraham, he aſſerts, to be the image of a perfect Chriſtian; Sarah the image of Chriſtian wiſdom; and Hagar the image of philoſophy or human wiſdom. Abraham lived with Sarah, for a long time, in a ſtate of connubial ſterility. The inference from this, according to Clement, is, that a Chriſtian, as long as he confines himſelf to the ſtudy of divine wiſdom and religion alone, will never bring forth any great or excellent fruits. Abraham, then, with the conſent of Sarah, takes to him Hagar; which proves, according to Clement, that a Chriſtian ought to embrace the wiſdom of this world or philoſophy, and that Sarah or divine wiſdom will not withhold her conſent. Laſtly, Abraham, after Hagar had borne him Iſmael, reſumed his intercourſe with Sarah, and of her begat Iſaac: of this the import is, that a Chriſtian, after having once thoroughly grounded himſelf in human learning and philoſophy, will, if he then devotes himſelf to the culture of divine wiſdom, be capable of propagating the race of true Chriſtians, and of rendering eſſential ſervice to the church. Plato and his diſciples maintained that the world was two-fold; the one *intellectual*,

or

CENT. II.

tures in ſupport of ſuch philoſophical tenets as they deemed juſt and reaſonable, the Chriſtians of

The practice ariſes of expounding Chriſtian tenets upon philoſophical principles. The ſecret diſcipline.

or only to be perceived mentally and by reaſon, the other *viſible* or an object of the ſenſes. This maxim met with the approbation of Clement: hence he is led to contend, that Plato derived this idea of a two-fold world from Moſes, and that it is to be ſupported on the authority of holy writ. The *intellectual* world, or that which is imperceptible to the ſenſes, he finds alluded to in the firſt words of *Geneſis*, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth; but the earth was (ἀόρατος) inviſible." And in the following words, "And God ſaid, let there be light," &c. he, with equal facility, diſcovers that a reference was intended to the *viſible* or corporeal world, *Stromat.* lib. v. p. 702. et ſeq. This abſurd art of perverting and ſtraining the Holy Scriptures did not, however, originate with the præfects of the catechetical ſchool of Alexandria, but was derived by them from the celebrated Alexandrian Jew, Philo. Clement's devotion to this writer is unbounded; him he is continually extolling, him he imitates, and from him he tranſcribes a variety of paſſages without even the changing of a word. Nor did Origen in the ſucceeding century, or thoſe who followed him, act otherwiſe. It is not, therefore, Origen who ought to be termed the parent of allegories amongſt the Chriſtians, but Philo. Indeed this has been already very juſtly remarked by Photius, who obſerves, (in *Biblioth.* cod. cv. p. 278.) Ἐξ ὧν οἶμαι καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἀλληγορικὸς τῆς γραφῆς ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ λόγος ἔσχεν ἀρχὴν εἰσρυῆναι. *Et vero ab hoc arbitror omnem allegoricum Sacræ Scripturæ ſermonem in eccleſiam promanaſſe.* This indeed is not altogether true, ſince many of the Jews, and in particular the Phariſees and Eſſenes, had indulged much in allegories before the time of Philo; but of this there can be no doubt, that the præfects of the Alexandrian ſchool caught the idea of interpreting Scripture upon philoſophical principles, or of eliciting philoſophical maxims from the ſacred writers by means of allegory, from Philo, and that by them it was gradually propagated amongſt the Chriſtians at large. It is alſo equally certain that by the writings and example of Philo, the fondneſs for allegories was vaſtly augmented and confirmed throughout the whole Chriſtian world: and it moreover appears, that it was he who firſt inſpired the Chriſtians with that degree of temerity which led them, not unfrequently, to violate the faith of hiſtory, and

of the Ammonian ſchool, with a view to illuſtrate, ſtill more clearly, the perfect accordance of human with divine wiſdom, and in this way the more readily to draw over philoſophers to their ſide, proceeded to the further length of giving to the moſt plain and obvious maxims and precepts of the goſpel ſuch an expoſition as might render them apparently conſiſtent with the philoſophical notions and opinions which they had ſo unfortunately been led to eſpouſe [g]. In their manner of doing this, however, a greater degree of caution and prudence

CENT. II.

The practice ariſes of expounding Chriſtian tenets upon philoſophical principles.

The ſecret diſcipline.

and wilfully to cloſe their eyes againſt the obvious and proper ſenſe of terms and words. The examples of this moſt preſumptuous boldneſs that occur in the writings of Philo are indeed but rare: particular inſtances of it, however, are not wanting; as may eaſily be ſhewn from Origen and others who took him for their guide, and who, manifeſtly, conſidered a great part both of the Old and New Teſtament as not exhibiting a repreſentation of things that really occurred, but merely the images of moral actions. If the reader will give himſelf the trouble to refer to Philo *de Allegoricis Legis*, lib. iii. p. 134. he will find in the turn that is there given to the hiſtory of Joſeph and Potiphar's wife, an inſtance which may ſerve to convince him that this celebrated Jew made no ſcruple of perverting, and even abſolutely reverſing the truth of ſacred hiſtory whenever occaſion might appear to demand it.

[g] Whatever, for inſtance, is to be met with in Scripture reſpecting God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, was ſo expounded by theſe Chriſtians as to render it conſiſtent with the doctrine of three hypoſtaſes or natures in God as maintained by Plato, Parmenides, and others. Clement. *Stromat.* lib. v. p. 710. Again, what is ſaid by the ſacred writers reſpecting the future deſtruction and burning of the world, was ſo explained by them as to make it accord with what was taught by Plato and the Stoics reſpecting the purification and renovation of the world by fire. Vid. Clement *Stromat.* lib. v. p. 647. 711. & ſeq. The reſtoration or reſurrection of the dead was ſo interpreted as to accommodate it to the tenets of the Grecian

CENT. II.

dence was obſerved by ſome than by others. By not a few the expoſitions of the Chriſtian myſteries, which their ingenuity had thus ſuggeſted were promulgated without reſerve, and endeavours uſed to get them adopted by the church, as appears from the diſputes that took place with Praxeas, Theodotus, Hermogenes, and Artemon. But by far the greater part, purſuing the example of the Egyptian teachers, appear to have wiſhed, that the principles of Chriſtianity ſhould be unfolded and explained to the people at large, with every poſſible degree of plainneſs and ſimplicity, and that the more abſtruſe and philoſophic interpretation of them ſhould never reach the ears of the multitude, but be made known only to certain ſelect perſons of tried faith and a cultivated underſtanding; and not even to theſe through the medium of writing, but merely by word of mouth. Hence aroſe that more ſecret and ſublime theology of the ancient Chriſtians to which we have of late been accuſtomed to refer under the title of *Diſciplina Arcani* [*b*], and which Clement of Alexandria ſtyles γνωσις or *knowledge*,

The practice ariſes of expounding Chriſtian tenets upon philoſophical principles.

The ſecret diſcipline.

ſages. The different paſſages in holy writ that relate to the illuminating, purifying, and regenerating of the mind were, with great ingenuity, made to correſpond with what was taught by moſt of the Egyptian and Platonic philoſophers of the ancient as well as modern ſchool reſpecting the philoſophical death, or the ſeparation of the rational ſoul from the ſenſitive one, and alſo from the influence of the body. In fact there are but few points of Chriſtian theology, which the teachers who were inflamed with this eager deſire to produce an union between Chriſtianity and philoſophy, left untouched.

[*b*] That the more learned of the Chriſtians, ſubſequently to the ſecond century, cultivated, in ſecret, an abſtruſe diſcipline of a different nature from that which they taught

ledge, but which differs from what is called *Myſtical Theology*, only in name [*i*]. CENT. II.

XXXV. As The ſecret diſcipline.

[*i*] The ſecret diſcipline was of a more comprehenſive nature than the myſtical theology, inaſmuch as it embraced the whole of the philoſophical theology that ſprung up in Egypt in the ſecond century, and gradually found its way from thence to other nations. What we find termed myſtical theology appears to have compriſed the beſt and nobleſt part of this ſecret diſcipline; I mean that which reſpects life and morals, the purifying of the ſoul, and exalting it above every object of ſenſe. For it is well known, that the true and genuine Myſtics adopted, as the very baſis and ground-work of their diſcipline, thoſe principles reſpecting the Deity, the world, the ſoul, and the nature of man, which the Chriſtians had borrowed from the Egyptian and Modern Platonic philoſophy, and were accuſtomed, from this century downwards, to communicate merely to a ſelect number of auditors.

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taught publicly, is well known to every one. Concerning the argument, however, or matter of this ſecret or myſterious diſcipline, its origin, and the cauſes which gave riſe to it, there are infinite diſputes. But theſe contentions, as is commonly the caſe amongſt mortals, inſtead of elucidating, have rather tended to throw additional obſcurity over a thing, of itſelf ſufficiently intricate, and that ſeems, as it were, to have ſet illuſtration at defiance. This has more particularly been the caſe ſince the advocates for the Papacy have endeavoured to avail themſelves of this ſecret diſcipline of the ancient Chriſtians in ſupport of their cauſe. To me it appears, that this obſcurity might be in part removed if due attention were paid to a circumſtance which ſeems to have been hitherto commonly overlooked, namely, that amongſt the ancient Chriſtians, there exiſted, not merely one, but ſeveral ſpecies of ſecret diſcipline, which were indeed of ſome affinity to each other, but between which it is neceſſary in regard to this queſtion to draw a line of diſtinction, in order to prevent our confounding together things in themſelves really different. In the firſt place, there was a ſort of ſecret or myſterious diſcipline that related to thoſe who were enemies to the Chriſtian religion and worſhippers of falſe gods: but even this was of more than one kind. For firſt, there was a ſort of diſcipline of this nature that re-

CENT. II.

XXXV. As the love of philoſophy originated amongſt the Chriſtians a two-fold interpretation

Moral theology aſſumes a two fold character.

ſpected all who were adverſe to the Chriſtian faith generally and without diſtinction. There were certain points of belief, for inſtance, at this time current amongſt the Chriſtians reſpecting the deſtruction that hung over the city of Rome and the empire, as well as the wars and final diſcomfiture of Antichriſt, the near approach of the end of the world, the millenium, and other matters, peradventure connected with theſe. Now if things of this kind had been promulgated without reſerve amongſt the multitude, there can be no doubt but that a very conſiderable degree of enmity and ill-will would have been excited in the minds of the Roman people towards the Chriſtians. Great care was therefore taken to conceal every thing of this nature from all except comparatively a few, of whoſe fidelity and ſecrecy there could be no apprehenſion. Wherefore, when Montanus and his followers, in this very century, publicly propheſied the downfal of the city and empire of Rome, it proved highly diſpleaſing to the Chriſtians, and they at once withdrew themſelves from every ſort of connection with a man who could be guilty of ſuch imprudence. *Hoc ſolum*, ſays Tertullian, (in his *Vindiciæ Montani* which are loſt, but of which this paſſage is preſerved *apud Prædeſtinat.* a Jac. Sirmond. edit. lib. i. Hæres. xxvi. p. 30.) *hoc ſolum diſcrepamus* (the Montaniſts from other Chriſtians) *quod ſecundas nuptias non recipimus et prophetiam Montani de futuro judicio non recuſamus.* Now, as to the future general judgment, all Chriſtians believed in it, and there could, therefore, have been no occaſion for Montanus to propheſy any thing at all about it. By *futurum judicium* in the above paſſage, therefore, we muſt underſtand the judgment which this man had inadvertently propheſied as awaiting the Roman empire in particular; and againſt this propheſy the Chriſtians deemed it prudent to proteſt, leſt the enmity of the Roman emperors and people, of which they had already ſufficiently felt the weight, ſhould be ſtill further excited againſt them. Another ſpecies of ſecret diſcipline had relation to thoſe whom the Chriſtians were deſirous of reſcuing from the dominion of ſuperſtition and initiating in the principles of Chriſtianity. With theſe they found it neceſſary to proceed ſomewhat cautiouſly, leſt, by a premature communication of the truth, their minds might receive impreſſions unfavourable to the Chriſtian religion. They, therefore, obſerved at the firſt a total ſilence with regard

tion of thoſe principles by which the intellect is inſtructed in the way of ſalvation, the one public

CENT. II.

Moral theology aſſumes a two-fold character.

regard to the doctrine contained in the Scripture reſpecting the perſon, merits, and functions of Chriſt; as well as thoſe other myſteries, to the right comprehending of which the human mind is of itſelf unequal, and confined themſelves wholly to ſuch things as right reaſon points out concerning the Deity, the nature of man, and his duties. When theſe had been ſufficiently inculcated and ſuitably received, and not before, they proceeded to points of a higher and more abſtruſe nature. Reſpecting the practice of the early Chriſtians in regard to this, the reader will find a notable paſſage in the *Apoſtolical Conſtitutions*, lib. iii. cap. v. *Patrum Apoſtolic.* tom. i. p. 280, 281. In either of theſe ſpecies of ſecret diſcipline there ſhould ſeem to have been nothing at which any one of an impartial and well-informed mind can take any ſerious offence. Entirely diſtinct from theſe there exiſted another ſpecies of ſecret diſcipline, which regarded Chriſtians alone, and had reſpect, in part, to the catechumens, or thoſe who had not as yet been received into the church, and in part to the regular members of the church. This diſcipline, ſo far as it regarded the catechumens, is ſufficiently known. The catechumens were not admitted either to the common prayers, or to a ſight of the celebration of the ſacred rites ordained by Chriſt, or to what were termed the feaſts of love; nor were they at all inſtructed as to the nature of theſe parts of divine worſhip, or any of the injunctions or regulations appertaining to them, until they had been regularly adopted as members of the church by baptiſm; and, conſiſtently with this, the ſacred preachers made it a rule to abſtain from entering into any diſcuſſions immediately relating either to baptiſm or the Lord's ſupper, in preſence of the catechumens. But this kind of diſcipline had certainly in it ſomewhat of an alien caſt, and betrayed an imitation of foreign manners and cuſtoms but little laudable. Of a much more praiſe-worthy nature was the practice of conſulting the furtherance and advantage of weak and illiterate Chriſtians, by directing the teachers to accommodate their diſcourſes to the capacities of their hearers, and in popular addreſſes to omit all ſuch things as were not, without difficulty, to be comprehended by perſons of low and ſimple minds. Inſtructions to this effect are to be found in Origen *contra Celſum*, lib. iii. p. 143. edit. Spencer. as well as in other Chriſtian writers. Undoubtedly

CENT. II. public, and accommodated to vulgar minds, the other ſecret, and intelligible only to capacities of

Moral theology aſſumes a two-fold character.

edly nothing can be more commendable and wiſe than to avoid troubling weak and ſimple minds with things, to the right comprehenſion of which an ordinary degree of intelligence is by no means equal. In addition to all theſe different ſpecies of ſecret diſcipline, which had relation to particular claſſes of men, and were regulated by certain modes and times, there remains ſtill yet another to be mentioned, of a nature altogether different, being controuled neither by time nor place, and having reſpect to no claſs of men in particular, but, with a few exceptions, equally regarding all, as well Chriſtians as thoſe who were ſtrangers to the Chriſtian faith. This, without queſtion, conſiſted of divers maxims and opinions which were cheriſhed by the Chriſtian teachers in private amongſt themſelves, and never communicated to the people at large, or even to their own immediate diſciples indiſcriminately, but only in ſecret to ſuch of theſe latter as had given ſatisfactory proofs of their truſt-worthineſs and taciturnity. Clement of Alexandria is the firſt writer that notices this ſort of diſcipline: before him no mention whatever is made of it by any author. There can, therefore, be but little doubt but that it originated amongſt the Chriſtians of Egypt, and was, by them, communicated to the other churches. Clement repreſents this ſecret diſcipline, to which he gives the title of γνωσις, as having been inſtituted by Chriſt himſelf. From a paſſage in his *Hypotypoſes*, a work long ſince loſt, which is cited by Euſebius in *Eccl. Hiſtor.* lib. ii. cap. i. p. 38. it appears that he conſidered this γνωσις, or gift of knowledge, as having been conferred by our Lord, after his reſurrection, on James the Juſt, John, and Peter, by whom it was communicated to the other apoſtles; and that, by theſe, this treaſure was committed to the ſeventy diſciples, of whom Barnabas was one. A ſimilar paſſage to this occurs in his *Stromata*, lib. i. p. 322. in which, however, to the three apoſtles enumerated by Euſebius, he adds a fourth, namely, Paul, whom he alſo conceives to have been inſtructed in this ſecret diſcipline by Chriſt himſelf. Nor does he diſcover the leaſt heſitation in aſſerting, with the Gnoſtics, that the diſcipline communicated by our Bleſſed Saviour to mankind was of a two-fold nature, the one calculated for the world at large, the other deſigned only for the wiſe and prudent; the former conſiſting

of the higher order; ſo likewiſe did it occaſion a two-fold form to be aſſumed by that wiſdom which,

CENT. II.

Moral theology aſſumes a two-fold character.

ing of what was taught publicly to the people by Chriſt himſelf, and is to be found in the Scriptures, the latter, of certain maxims and precepts that were communicated merely by word of mouth, to a few only of the apoſtles. Ὃν πολλοῖς ἀπεκάλυψεν ἃ μὴ πολλῶν ἦν, ὀλίγοις δὲ οἷς προσήκειν ἠπίστατο, τοῖς οἵοις τε ἐκδέξασθαι, καὶ τυπωθῆναι πρὸς αὐτά. *Non revelavit (Chriſtus) multis ea quæ non erant multorum, ſed paucis quibus ſciebat convenire, qui et ea poſſent accipere et ex eis informari. Stromat.* lib. i. cap. i. p 323. Clement makes it a matter of boaſt that the ſecret diſcipline thus inſtituted by Chriſt was familiar to thoſe who had been his maſters and preceptors, whom he very laviſhly extolls, and ſeems to exult not a little in having, under their tuition, enjoyed the advantage of being inſtructed in it himſelf. A part of it, indeed, he ſays, had, through length of time, eſcaped his memory, but that the reſt of it remained ſtill freſh in his mind. He promiſes, moreover, that he would advert to ſome of the chief or leading points of this venerable knowledge in his *Stromata*, but repreſents himſelf as bound not openly to make known or explain the whole of it, leſt, according to the proverb, he ſhould put a ſword in the hand of a child. Τὰ μὲν ἐκὼν παραπέμπομαι, ſays he, p. 324. ἐκλίγων ἐπισημόνως, φοβέμενος γεάφειν, ἃ καὶ λέγειν ἐφυλαξάμην. *Nonnulla quidem conſulto prætermitto, ſcienter delictum faciens, timens ſcribere, quæ etiam cavi dicere.* In another place, *viz.* p. 327. he ſays, Στωματεῖς κρυπτεῖν ἐντέχνως τὰ τῆς γνώσιως βέλονται σπέρματα. *Libri mei Stromatum volunt artificioſe celare ſemina cognitionis.* To any one who might be at a loſs to account for his declining to make publicly known, and in a great meaſure altogether concealing, a ſpecies of knowledge, confeſſedly of the higheſt importance and value, he replies (cap. iii. p. 328.) that it was not to be comprehended, except by minds that had been thoroughly purged and delivered from the dominion of the paſſions, that there would, moreover, be a danger in it, leſt occaſion might be given to contentious perſons for cavilling and inſult. Ὅτι μέγας ὁ κίνδυνος τὸν ἀπορρήτον ὡς ἀληθῶς τῆς ὄντως φιλοσοφίας λόγον ἐξοχήσασθαι τοῖς ἀφειδῶς πάντα μὲν ἀντιλέγειν ἐθέλουσιν· ὕβρις ἐν δίκῃ, πάντα δὲ ὀνόματα καὶ ῥήματα ἀπορρίπτουσιν ἀδαμῶς κοσμίως. *Quia magnum eſt periculum vere arcanam veræ philoſophiæ rationem iis propalare, qui profuſe quidem ac petulanter, ſed non jure, volunt contra omnes dicere, omnia autem nomina et verba*

CENT. II

Moral theology aſſume a two-fold character.

which, in a more particular manner, reſpects life and morals; the one ſuited to the multitude,

turpiter ac indecore ejaculantur. See alſo lib. ii. p. 432. & ſeq. Many other paſſages of this kind are to be met with in Clement by any one who will be at the trouble of diligently exploring his *Stromata*. What thoſe maxims and principles were which Clement conceived himſelf to be precluded from communicating to the world at large, cannot long remain a ſecret to any diligent and attentive reader of his works. There cannot be the ſmalleſt queſtion but that they were philoſophical explications of the Chriſtian tenets reſpecting the Trinity, the ſoul, the world, the future reſurrection of the body, Chriſt, the life to come, and other things of a like abſtruſe nature, which had in them ſomewhat that admitted of being expounded upon philoſophical principles. They alſo, no doubt, conſiſted of certain myſtical and allegorical interpretations of the divine oracles, calculated to ſupport thoſe philoſophical expoſitions of the Chriſtian principles, and tenets. For ſince, as we have above ſeen, he expreſsly intimates that he would in his *Stromata* unfold a part of that ſecret wiſdom which was deſigned only for the few, but that in doing this he would not ſo far throw off all reſerve as to render himſelf univerſally intelligible; and ſince we find him, in the courſe of the above-mentioned work, continually giving to the more excellent and important truths contained in the ſacred volume, ſuch an interpretation as tends to open a wide field for conjecture, and alſo comparing, not openly but in a conciſe and half obſcure way, the Chriſtian tenets with the maxims of the philoſophers, I am willing to reſign every pretenſion to penetration if it be not clearly to be perceived of what nature that ſublime knowledge reſpecting divine matters muſt have been, of which he makes ſuch a myſtery. Nor was there any other ſpecies of ſecret knowledge beſides this poſſeſſed by his principal diſciple Origen, who, although he was anxious to make the Chriſtian religion conform itſelf, in almoſt every reſpect, to the rule of his philoſophy, had yet the wiſdom to propound his opinions with prudence and caution, and to avoid a full and explicit diſcovery of them. What Clement ſays reſpecting the divine origin of this diſcipline is, unqueſtionably, a mere fiction, deviſed, either by him or ſome other admirer of philoſophy, with a view to ſilence the importunate remonſtrances of thoſe friends to Chriſtian

tude, who incline to ſociety and ſuffer themſelves to be involved in the cares and concerns of CENT. II.

More theology aſſumes a two-fold character.

Chriſtian ſimplicity who, mindful of St. Paul's injunction, were continually proteſting againſt any attempt to blend philoſophy with the religion of the goſpel. To Clement, ſuch ſanctified deceptions and pious inventions appeared not at all unwarrantable; indeed there can be no doubt, but that they were countenanced by all ſuch of the Chriſtian teachers as were of the Egyptian or Modern Platonic ſchool. Why James, and John, and Peter ſhould have been, in particular, fixed upon as the apoſtles whom Chriſt ſelected as the moſt worthy of having this recondite wiſdom communicated to them by word of mouth, is very eaſily to be perceived. For theſe were the three diſciples whom our Bleſſed Saviour took apart with him up into the mountain when he was about to be transfigured, Matt. xvii. 1. Luke ix. 28. To repreſent them therefore as having in a peculiar manner been favoured with an inſight into all myſteries appeared to be but conſiſtent and proper. In reality there can be no doubt but that Clement, and moſt probably alſo his maſters, whoſe authority he frequently adduces, learnt the mode of blending philoſophy with religion from Philo; and the ſecret diſcipline, or the practice of cautiouſly concealing their philoſophical explications of the Scriptures and the principles of Chriſtianity, from the Egyptians as well as from Philo. The thing, in fact, is not altogether diſſembled by Clement, who frequently compares his ſecret diſcipline with the heathen myſteries and the interior and recondite wiſdom of the philoſophers, and defends it by a reference to both of theſe. But the matter muſt be clear, beyond a queſtion, to any one who ſhall peruſe the writings of Philo with attention; ſince he in many places equally extols the ſecret diſcipline, and, for the moſt part, ſpeaks of it in the ſame terms, and defends it by the ſame reaſons and arguments as Clement. Nor is the recondite diſcipline of Philo of a different nature from Clement's; on the contrary it correſponds with it in every reſpect. Vid. Philo, in lib. *de Cherubim*, p. 144, 145. *de Sacrificiis*, p. 139. lib. *de Plantatione Noë*, p. 231. et paſſim. Being, in lib. iii. *Allegor. Legum*, p. 131. about to give an explication of the words of Sarah, in *Geneſis*, xxi. 6. "God hath made me to laugh," he thus beſpeaks the attention of thoſe who were initiated in the ſecret diſcipline, Ἀναπετάσαντες τὰ ὦτα, οἱ μύσαι, παραδέξασθε τελετὰς ἱερωτάτας. *Itaque quotquot eſtis initiati,*

CENT. II.

of this life; the other calculated for ſuch as, aſpiring after a higher degree of ſanctity, and a more

Moral theology aſſumes a two-fold character.

itiati, expanſis auribus accipite myſteria ſacratiſſima. After this preamble he preſents the reader with a philoſophical explication of theſe words of Sarah, which cannot be ſaid to be altogether an obſcure one, but, at the ſame time, it is by no means clear or perſpicuous: in ſhort you may plainly perceive that what he aims at is, not to make himſelf underſtood generally, but only by ſuch as had been initiated in the ſecret diſcipline or philoſophical religion. In this he is imitated exactly by Clement in lib. *de Cherubim*, p. 146, 147. edit. Anglic. p. 115. ed. Paris, where he undertakes to explain, from the Moſaic hiſtory, the manner in which virtue is generated, and how, of itſelf, it generates other virtues. For firſt of all he thus gravely repulſes the profane: Ἀκοὰς ἐπιφραξάτωσαν δεισιδαίμονες τὰς ἑαυτῶν ἢ μετασήτωσαν. *Superſtitioſi vel diſcedant vel obturent aures ſuas.* Τελεταὶς γὰρ ἀναδιδάσκομεν θείας τὰς τελιτῶν ἀξίως τῶν ἱερωτάτων μύσας, *divina enim myſteria tradimus his, qui talibus ſacris digne initiati ſunt.* —— Ἐκείνους δὲ οὐκ ἱεροφάντησομεν κατισχημένους ἀνιάτῳ κακῷ, τύφῳ ῥημάτων καὶ ὀνομάτων γλισχρότητι, καὶ τερθρείαις ἡθῶν. *Illos autem haudquaquam ad hæc ſacra admittimus, qui tenentur morbo inſanabili, faſtu verborum et nominum fuco, et morum præſtigiis.* Numerous paſſages ſimilar to theſe are to be found in Clement. The explication and demonſtration drawn from Moſes, to which this pompous exordium is a prelude, is indeed, upon the whole, not unintelligible; its entire force and ſignification, however, is not to be comprehended except by the initiated in the myſteries of the Philonian philoſophy; and to all ſuch a very earneſt and particular injunction is addreſſed by Philo at the concluſion of his Inſtitutes, requiring them on no account to make the vulgar partakers of their knowledge. It will be enough for me to give merely a tranſlation of his words. "Having then, O ye initiated! through the channel of purified organs, acquired a knowledge of theſe things, let them ſink deep into your minds as holy myſteries, not to be revealed to the profane. Bury them within your boſoms, and preſerve them there as a treaſure; a treaſure conſiſting, not of corruptible things, ſuch as ſilver and gold, but of the faireſt and moſt valuable portion of true wealth, namely, a knowledge of God and of virtue, and of the offſpring that is generated of them both. Whenever ye chance to meet with any one elſe of the initiated, beſeech him with the moſt earneſt

a more intimate communion with the Deity, turn their backs on the buſineſs, noiſe, and buſtle of

CENT. II.

Moral theology aſſumes a two-fold character.

earneſt intreaties not to conceal from you any myſtery that he may have more recently diſcovered, and leave him not until you ſhall have obtained from him the moſt intimate inſight into it." In his book *de Sacrificiis Abelis et Caini*, p. 173. tom. i. opp. he with aſtoniſhing ſubtilty deduces from *Gen.* xviii. 6. where Sarah is ſaid have "made ready quickly three meaſures of fine meal, and baked cakes thereof upon the hearth," a ſupport for the principle which he frequently takes occaſion to inculcate of the exiſtence of three powers in the Deity; and having done ſo, he here likewiſe, by way of concluſion, makes a point of remarking that neither this nor any other myſtery ought to be generally made known: μηδενὶ προχείρως ἐκλαλῆ τὰ θεῖα μυστήρια, ταμιευομένη δ' αὐτὰ καὶ ἐγκεμυθεῦσα ἐν ἀποῤῥήτῳ φυλάττη. *Anima divina myſteria nemini proloquatur facile; ſed ſervans ea recondita reticeat et in ſecreto ſervet.* No detriment, I am perſuaded, can enſue from my declining to notice at large the remarks on this and ſimilar paſſages that have been publiſhed by Thomas Mangey, the late editor of Philo, ſince they afford but little aſſiſtance to a reader who is deſirous of penetrating into the cauſes and reaſon of things. It may however be worthy of notice in this place that Philo makes the principle of the exiſtence of three powers in the Deity, concerning which there has been amongſt men of the firſt eminence ſuch a diverſity of opinion and conjecture, a part of the ſecret diſcipline. Hence it is that we never find him either openly propounding or attempting any explication of it, but on the contrary always ſpeaking of it in ſuch ambiguous terms as ſerve only to involve it in obſcurity. Nor does he at all times obſerve one and the ſame mode in treating of it, but purſues a very different method in ſome places from what he does in others. In regard to this, ſee what I have ſaid in my notes on Cudworth's *Intellectual Syſtem*, tom. i. p. 640. as well as what has been moſt learnedly remarked both in reſpect to this and other paſſages of Philo by that eminent ſcholar and moſt ſucceſsful emulator of illuſtrious predeceſſors, Jo. Bened. Carpzovius, in his *Exercitationes in Epiſt. ad Hebræos ex Philone Prolegom.* p. cxxxv. & ſeq. In my opinion therefore it muſt ever prove a mere waſte of time and pains to attempt any explication of the trinity of Philo, or to aſcertain in particular his notions reſpecting the nature

CENT. II. of the world. It is true, indeed, that even at an early period, when the Chriſtians were as yet

Moral theology aſſumes a two-fold character.

nature of what he terms the *Logos* or *Word*. The wary Jew is particularly cautious of committing himſelf with regard to theſe things, and evidently wiſhes to excite rather than to gratify a thirſt for a more intimate inſight into them. I ſpeak from experience; no interpretation that can be deviſed or thought of is readily to be reconciled with all the different paſſages reſpecting theſe myſteries, that occur in his works; indeed ſuch is the diſcordance of theſe paſſages, that they appear even totally repugnant to each other. In this way, it was but befitting for a man to proceed when treating of the ſecret or myſterious diſcipline. Ἄδεται, ſays he, in his book *de Sacrificiis Abelis et Caini*, tom. i. p. 189. where with a very cautious and delicate hand he touches on ſome of its leading points, Ἄδεται δὲ τὶ; καὶ τοι ἔστος ὡς ἐν ἀποῤῥήτοις λόγος, ὃν ἀκοαῖς πρεσβυτέρων παραπατίτισθαι χρὴ νεωτέρων ὦτα ἐπιφράξαντας. *Celebratur et alia, quæ tamen ad myſteria,* (*i. e.* the ſecret diſcipline) *pertinet ſententia, deponenda penes aures ſeniorum, obturatis juniorum auribus.* On the preſent occaſion I cannot but feel that it would be wrong in me to detain the reader with what elſe might be adduced from Philo on this ſubject: a word or two more, therefore, and I have done. Philo, without doubt, imitated the Egyptians; Clement, as unqueſtionably, followed the example of Philo; and Origen trod clearly in the footſteps of both. The more recent Chriſtian teachers, for the moſt part, formed themſelves upon the model of this latter father. The ſecret diſcipline of Philo conſiſted in the application of philoſophic principles to religion and the ſacred writings; nor was that of Clement ever thought to differ from it, except by thoſe who had not ſufficiently informed themſelves on the ſubject. The reader will underſtand me in what I have ſaid above as not meaning to attribute the abſolute invention of this diſcipline to Philo: for we know that long before his time it had been the practice of ſeveral Jews to expound and illuſtrate Moſes from the writings of Plato and other Greek philoſophers: but of this, I think, there can be no doubt, that Clement and the other Egyptian teachers by whom this diſcipline was firſt introduced into the Chriſtian church, were indebted for their acquaintance with it entirely to Philo. Wonderful, indeed, is it to contemplate the influence and authority which this Alexandrian Jew had at one time acquired amongſt the Chriſtians.

We

CENT. II.

yet ſtrangers to philoſophy, there were to be found amongſt them perſons who, by abſtaining from thoſe things which gratify the ſenſes, ſuch as marriage, fleſh, wine, and the more ſolid kinds of food, and by neglecting every culture or attention to the body, ſought to diſengage and purify their minds from all inordinate deſires and affections, and thus to conſecrate themſelves entirely to God [*k*]: but upon the introduction of the Egyptian and Platonic philoſophy,

Moral theology aſſumes a two-fold character.

We may even go the length of ſaying that, without Philo, the writings of thoſe whom we term "the Fathers" would in many reſpects be frequently altogether unintelligible.

[*k*] That amongſt the moſt early Chriſtians there were ſome who profeſſed a more ſtrict and ſevere courſe of life than others, and not only debarred themſelves of lawful gratifications and indulgences, but alſo broke down the ſtrength and vigour of their animal frame by frequent faſtings and other rigorous practices, is placed out of all doubt by numerous teſtimonies. It is alſo well known that theſe perſons were commonly termed "Aſcetics," from the verb ασκειν, which means to train or prepare one's ſelf for a combat. See, amongſt many other authorities, Deyling, *Exerc. de Aſcetis Veterum*, ſubjoined to the third book of his *Obſervationes Sacræ*; and Bingham's *Antiquities of the Chriſtian Church*, vol. iii. p. 3. & ſeq. What gave riſe to this ſort of people, and at what time they firſt made their appearance, is not equally clear. To me it appears that thoſe Aſcetics (for they were not at all of one and the ſame deſcription, neither did they all obſerve the ſame rules) I ſay, it ſtrikes me that thoſe Aſcetics who declined marriage and preferred a life of celebacy, without, however, rejecting any other of the comforts and conveniences of life, muſt have been the moſt ancient of any; and that perſons of this deſcription were to be found even in the very infancy of Chriſtianity. For we know that what is ſaid by Chriſt himſelf in *Matt.* xix. 12, reſpecting thoſe who make themſelves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's ſake, as well as what St. Paul ſays in 1 *Corinth.* vii. 7. 25. & ſeq. 38. reſpecting the preference due to celibacy, was by moſt ſo underſtood from the firſt as to cauſe it generally to be believed that unmarried perſons were happier, more

CENT. II.

philoſophy this ſimple mode of life was reduced into the form of an art, and interwoven with ſuch

Moral theology aſſumes a two-fold character.

perfect, and more acceptable to God than others. Hence there was always to be found amongſt the Chriſtians no ſmall number of perſons who deemed it expedient to avoid marriage. Let us hear the celebrated Chriſtian philoſopher of this century, Athenagoras, in *Apolog. pro Chriſtianis*, cap. xxviii. p. 129. ed. Oxon. Εὑροις δ' ἂν πολλοὺς τῶν παρ' ἡμῖν καὶ ἄνδρας καὶ γυναῖκας καταγηράσκοντα ἀγάμους, ἐλπίδι τῷ μᾶλλον συνέσεσθαι τῷ θεῷ. *Invenias autem multos ex noſtris in utroque ſexu, qui in cælibatu conſeneſcant, quod ita Deo ſe conjunctiores futuros ſperent.* And to the ſame purport Tertullian, *de Cultu Feminar.* lib. ii. p. 179 cap. ix. ed. Rigalt. *Non enim et multi ita faciunt, et ſe ſpadonatui obſignant propter regnum Dei tam fortem et utique permiſſam voluptatem ſponte ponentes?* Thoſe Aſcetics, who either abſtained from fleſh and wine, or elſe mortified their bodies by frequent faſtings, or devoted themſelves to a courſe of ſevere and laborious diſcipline, by way of countenancing all vicious propenſities and perturbations of the mind, are, unqueſtionably, of more recent origin, and cannot, I think, be placed higher than the age of which we are now treating. On theſe alſo we find commendation beſtowed by the writers of this century; but they are always placed beneath thoſe who were emphatically termed ἐγκρατεῖς "the continent," in oppoſition to the "incontinent;" that is, they are always placed after thoſe who had renounced marriage. *Quid enim*, ſays Tertullian, (*de velandis Virginibus*, cap. iii. p. 194.) *ſi et incontinentes dicant ſe a continentibus ſcandalizari* (*i. e.* ſuppoſing thoſe who are married ſhould complain of being ſcandalized by thoſe who have profeſſed celibacy) *continentia revocanda eſt?* add to which what is to found in Du Freſne's *Gloſſary*, tom. ii. p. 1020. ſub voc. *Continentes*. Without doubt we may conclude that Chriſt himſelf and St. Paul were conſidered as having expreſsly recommended celibacy, but that with regard to an abſtinence from fleſh and wine, faſtings and the like, they had left behind them no particular injunctions: that the latter, therefore, although perhaps in themſelves both proper and laudable, were nevertheleſs regarded as of merely human inſtitution, whilſt the former appeared to poſſeſs the character of a divine recommendation. Tertullian in one part of his treatiſe *de Cultu Faminarum*, lib. ii. cap. ix. p. 179. makes mention of both theſe ſpecies of Aſcetics, but

CENT. II.

ſuch maxims reſpecting the Deity, the human ſoul, and the nature of man, as were thought moſt

Moral theology aſſumes a two-fold character.

but in ſuch a way as plainly to ſhew that in point of dignity and ſanctity, he gave a decided preference to the continent, or thoſe whom he terms "Voluntary Eunuchs." For after having ſpoken of theſe latter, he goes on thus;—*Numquid non aliqui ipſam Dei creaturam ſibi interdicunt, abſtinentes vino et animalibus eſculentis, quorum fructus nulli periculo aut ſollicitudini adjacent, ſed humilitatem animæ ſuæ in victus quoque caſtigatione Deo immolant?* To any one who will duly weigh the force of theſe words, and compare them with what goes before, it cannot fail to be apparent that Tertullian was far from placing the Abſtinent on a level with the Continent, or thoſe who renounced marriage. The opinion, pretty generally entertained by the learned, that theſe Aſcetics of the early ages were accuſtomed to diſtinguiſh themſelves from other Chriſtians by their dress, and that in particular, by way of pointing themſelves out as philoſophers, they adopted the mantle or cloak, appears to me to require the ſupport of ſtronger and more poſitive teſtimony than any one has hitherto been able to adduce in its favour. I am ready to allow indeed that ſuch of, them as made pretenſions to a greater degree of ſtrictneſs either in point of continence or abſtinence, might affect to make this known by the quality or colour of their garb: But that the Aſcetics of the early ages, as a body of men, diſtinguiſhed themſelves by any peculiar dreſs, or that the philoſopher's cloak or mantle, in particular, was ever conſidered as appropriate to them, is what I cannot, by any means, bring myſelf to believe. The teſtimonies that are uſually brought forward in ſupport of the above opinion are either of more recent date than the firſt three centuries, or elſe relate merely to thoſe philoſophers who, notwithſtanding their converſion to Chriſtianity, retained their priſtine garb, that is, the mantle or cloak: of which practice the reader will recollect me to have noticed ſome examples a few pages back. And I really muſt enter my proteſt againſt any ſuch unwarrantable deduction as this,—that becauſe thoſe who were philoſophers before they embraced the Chriſtian faith, remained ſo ſtill notwithſtanding their converſion to Chriſtianity, and continued as before to inveſt themſelves with a cloak or mantle by way of diſtinction, it is incumbent on us to believe that all the Chriſtian Aſcetics aſſumed this cloak or philoſophical dreſs likewiſe. If, however, ſome certain individuals

CENT. II.

Moral theology aſſumes a two-fold character.

moſt conſonant to reaſon. All ſuch Chriſtians, for inſtance, as aſpired to a degree of ſanctity beyond the vulgar, were enjoined by means of contemplation, ſobriety, continence, mortifications of the body, ſolitude, and the like, to ſeparate, as far as poſſible, that ſoul which was the offspring of the eternal reaſon of the Deity, from the ſenſitive ſoul, as well as from every ſort of bodily influence, ſo that they might, even in this life, be united to and enjoy the moſt intimate communion with the Supreme Parent of ſouls, and upon the diſſolution of the body, their minds being thoroughly diſencumbered of every ſordid and debaſing tie, might regain, without impediment, their proper ſtations in the regions above. To this ſource is to be aſcribed the riſe of the Myſtics, a denomination of men that firſt made their appearance amongſt the philoſophiſing Chriſtians of Egypt in the courſe of this century, and gradually ſpread themſelves throughout the Chriſtian church [*l*]. Hither alſo

individuls of the Aſcetics, by way of manifeſting to the world the kind of life to which they had devoted themſelves, did actually aſſume the philoſophic cloak, which I beg to be underſtood as by no means intending to deny, there cannot be a doubt but that they did ſo purely out of imitation of the heathen ſages, and by way of pointing out to the Greeks and Romans, that amongſt the Chriſtians alſo were to be found philoſophers.

[*l*] It was not until long after the light of Chriſtianity had riſen on the world that the terms "myſtical theology" and "Myſtics" were ever heard of. The things themſelves, however, to which theſe names came afterwards to be applied, are by far more ancient than the Chriſtian church. Long antecedent to the coming of Chriſt there were to be found, not only amongſt the Egyptians but alſo amongſt the Jews, who copied after the Egyptians, (as is placed out of all queſtion by the Eſſenes and Therapeutæ) as well as in other nations, certain perſons who made it their ſtudy,

CENT II.

alſo may we refer the origin of Monks, Hermits, and Cœnobites, whoſe rules and inſtitutions are

Moral theology aſſume a two-fold character.

ſtudy, by means of faſting, labour, contemplation, and other afflictive exerciſes, to deliver their rational ſouls, which they conſidered as the offſpring of the Deity unhappily confined within corporeal priſons, from the bonds of the fleſh and the ſenſes, and to reſtore them to an uninterrupted communion with their God and parent. This diſcipline aroſe out of that ancient philoſophy of the Egyptians, which conſidered all things as having proceeded from God, and regarded the rational ſouls of the human race as more noble particles of the divine nature. When the Modern Platonic ſchool made that philoſophy, in a certain degree, its own, its diſciples were alſo incited to the adoption of this ſyſtem of bodily mortification. Neither, as has long ſince been remarked, is there any other tendency in what is laid down by Plato himſelf reſpecting the origin of minds, and of their fall into earthly bodies. Philo, whom we have already ſo often cited, will here again furniſh us with conſiderable light. The tenets of this very celebrated Jew (whoſe opinions were for a while held in much more eſteem than they deſerved by the Chriſtians,) reſpecting the ſoul, were in fact a compound or medley of the Egyptian, Platonic, and Moſaic principles. In the firſt place he lays it down that in man there are two ſouls; the one rational and generated of the Word, the other ſenſitive. *de Allegor. Legis*, lib. i. p. 51. 54. 57. tom. i. opp. The former or rational mind he regards as a portion of the Deity, that is, according to the Egyptians, a part of the moſt refined and ſupreme æther, and that conformably to the Moſaic account this had been imparted to man by the breath of God; in which it is to be remarked that he differs from Plato. Vid. *Allegor. Legis*, lib. iii. p. 119. The latter or ſenſitive ſoul he conſiders as impelled and animated by the divine mind, *Allegor. Legis*, lib. i. p. 51. & 54. The rational ſoul, according to him, is the ſeat of abſtract notions; whilſt the ſenſitive ſoul is occupied ſolely by the images of things that are objects of the ſenſes. *de Mundi Opificio*, p. 41. & ſeq. tom. i. ed. Anglic. I paſs over a variety of things which, for the moſt part, border too nearly on exceſſive refinement, and are not lain down with ſufficient perſpicuity. Proceeding on principles like theſe, he inculcates a doctrine altogether ſimilar to that taught by the Myſtics; namely, that the celeſtial and rational

CENT. II.

are uniformly grounded upon the principle of delivering the immortal ſpirit from the oppreſſion

Moral theology aſſumes a two-fold character.

rational ſoul ſhould erect itſelf above every object of the ſenſes, — that it ſhould ſeek, by means of contemplation, to ſeparate itſelf from the body, — that, mindful of its divine origin, it ſhould be conſtantly aſpiring to communion with its parent, and that it ſhould endeavour, by every poſſible means, to undermine and weaken the power and influence of the body and the ſenſes. To a ſoul once exalted above empty and corporeal things, he holds forth a promiſe of divine illumination, and pleaſure incredible. It may not be amiſs perhaps to confirm what I have thus ſtated by a ſpecimen or two, in order that the votaries of myſticiſm may be brought acquainted with the ſources from whence thoſe principles, in which they ſo much delight, are drawn. Let us then hear with what pomp and poetical colouring Philo deſcribes the aſcent of the ſoul to God, *de Mund. Opificio*, p. 16. tom. i. opp. Ψυχὴ πᾶσαν τὴν αἰσθητὴν ὐσίαν ὑπερκύψᾶς ἐντᾶυθα ἰφίηται τῆς νοητῆς καὶ ὧν εἰδὼν ἐντᾶυθα ἀισθητῶν, ἐν ἐκείνη τὰ παραδείγματα καὶ τὰς ἰδέας θεασάμενος, ὑπερβάλλοντα κάλλη, μέθη νηφαλίω κατασχεθεὶς, ὥσπερ οἱ κορυβαντιῶντες, ἐνθουσῖα, ἑτέρᾳ γεμισθεὶς ἰμέρᾳ καὶ πόθῳ βελτιόνος. *Anima emergens ſupra omnem ſenſibilem eſſentiam demum intelligibilis deſiderio corripitur*, (we have here, obviouſly, what is termed by the Myſtics, the "purgation," next follows their "illumination,") *illic conſpicata exemplaria, ideaſque rerum quas hic vidit ſenſibilium, eximias illas pulchritudines*, (a coincidence with the Platonic philoſophy is here obſervable,) *ebrietate quadam ſobria capta, tamquam Corybantes lymphatur alio plena amore longe meliore.* This high meaſure of felicity is crowned by a conjunction with the Parent Deity of all things. ὕφ' ἕ πρὸς τὴν ἄκραν ἀψῖδα παραπεμφθεὶς τῶν νοητῶν ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἰέναι δοκεῖ τὸν μέγαν βασιλεα. Γλιχομένῳ δ' ἰδεῖν, θεῖα φωτὸς ἄκρατοι καὶ ἄμιγεις αὐγαὶ χειμάῤῥῳ τρόπον ἐκχέονται, ὡς τᾶις μαρμαρυγᾶις τὸ τῆς διανόιας ὄμμα σκοτοδινῖαν. *A quo ad ſummum faſtigium adducta rerum intelligibilium, ad ipſum magnum regem videtur tendere; tum vero in videndi cupidam puriſſimus ac meriſſimus divinæ lucis radius more torrentis effunditur, ita ut ad eum ſplendorem caliget mentis oculus.* Surely the reader will believe that he has been liſtening to the Coryphæus of the Myſtics, Dionyſius, or to ſome Henry Suſo, or ſome other ſimilar character. In his *Allegor. Legis*, lib. i. p. 59. 60. he divides ſouls into two claſſes, "the Confeſſing (ἐξομολογεμένες), and "the Laboring"

preſſion under which it groans in being connected

Moral theology aſſumes a two-fold character.

bouring (ἐργαζομένης). The "confeſſing ſouls" are thoſe which, being freed from all contagion of the body, as well as diveſted of all cogitation and emotion, and exalted above every object of the ſenſes, have given themſelves up entirely to God, and maintain themſelves in the moſt perfect ſtate of quietiſm. Ὅταν γὰρ ἐκβῇ ὁ νοῦς ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ἑαυτὸν ἀνενέγκῃ Θεῷ — — — — τηνικαῦτα ὁμολογίαν τὴν πρὸς τὸν ὄντα ποιεῖται. Now in what author, I would aſk, ſhall we find language better agreeing with the pompous declamation of the Myſtics, or more aptly coinciding with their diſcipline? *Quum mens extra ſemetipſam exceſſerit, Deoque ſeipſum obtulerit — — — — tunc confeſſionem edit erga eum qui ſolus vere eſt.* But let us proceed: — ἕως δὲ αὐτὸν ὑποτίθηται ὡς αἴτιόν τινος, μάκραν ἀφέστηκε τοῦ παραχωρεῖν Θεῷ καὶ ὁμολογεῖν αὐτῷ. *Quamdiu vero anima ſe cauſam rei cujuſpiam exiſtimat* (that is, ſo long as the ſoul itſelf thinks, or reflects, or exerciſes a will of its own), *multum abeſt quin confiteatur, cedatque Deo.* But even all this is not ſufficient: for he will not allow even that ceſſation of the ſoul from every kind of action or exertion, which he enjoins, and which is the object or end of the myſtic life, to be the work of the ſoul, but will have it to be the operation of the Deity. The rational ſoul, he maintains, to be a portion of the Deity, and that it is therefore by the innate, or rather implanted power of God in her, that ſhe is enabled to caſt off the bonds of the fleſh and the ſenſitive ſoul, and to compoſe herſelf to a ſtate of the moſt perfect quietiſm. Καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸ τοῦτο τὸ ἐξομολογεῖσθαι νοητέον, ὅτι ἔργον ἐστὶ ἀχὶ τῆς ψυχῆς ἀλλὰ τοῦ φαίνοντος αὐτῇ Θεοῦ τὸ εὐχάριστον. *Nam et ipſa confeſſio debet intelligi non animæ opus, ſed Dei qui eam hanc gratitudinem docet.* The "labouring ſouls" of Philo are thoſe which endeavour, by a conſtant exerciſe of thought, reflection, and judgment, to arrive at virtue; and ſtrive to counteract all vicious propenſities and perturbations, by means of reading, meditation, and prayer: and concerning theſe he ſubſequently diſcourſes much at large. Let us now endeavour briefly to aſcertain from his *Allegor. Legis*, lib. i. p. 64, 65. what his doctrine was reſpecting the body. The very perfection of true wiſdom he pronounces to conſiſt in alienating one's ſelf from the body and its concupiſcence. Under the denomination of the body, however, he immediately gives us to underſtand that he means to include the ſenſes, alſo,

CENT. II. nected with the body, of purifying it from the corruptions

Moral theology aſſumes a two-fold character.

of the body, nay even the very voice itſelf; ſo that he ſhould ſeem to enjoin a man deſirous of attaining to a ſtate of virtue, not only to mortify the ſenſes, but alſo to forego the uſe of his tongue and voice. Σχεδὸν γὰρ σοφίας ἔργον τοῦτ' ἐστὶν, ἀλλοτριοῦσθαι πρὸς τὸ σῶμα, καὶ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας αὐτοῦ εἰς δ' ἀπολλύσιν κακίας, ἡ μόνον δεῖ πῶς ἔχειν τὸν νοῦν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν αἴσθησιν, καὶ τὸν λόγον, καὶ τὸ σῶμα. This ſubject is purſued by him at much length, and he cites in ſupport of his doctrine even Moſes himſelf, with whom he maintains that Heraclitus is in perfect uniſon. Laſtly, he aſſerts, that the ſoul during its continuance in the body lies as it were buried in a ſepulchre, and partakes in no degree of life, until after its ſeparation from vitiated and inert matter. Ψυχὴ; ὡς ἂν ἐν σήματι τῷ σώματι ἐντετομβευμένης· εἰ δὲ ἀποθάνοιμεν τῆς ψυχῆς ζώσης τὸν ἴδιον βιὸν καὶ ἀπειλλαγμένης κακοῦ καὶ νεκροῦ τοῦ συνδέτου σώματος. *Anima corpori inſepulta eſt tamquam monumento: quod ſi mortui fuerimus,* (the ſoul being delivered from the body,) *tum demum anima vivit vitam propriam, et a colligato ſibi corpore, quod malum et mortuum eſt, liberatam.* In ſhort, it would be eaſy for any one who might be ſo inclined, to collect from the writings of Philo an entire body of myſtical theology, correſponding even to minuteneſs, with the ſyſtem of Dionyſius and the other Myſtics of more recent times. I cannot therefore help feeling ſomewhat ſurpriſed that Arnold Poiret and others ſhould, in their catalogue of myſtic writers, have omitted to inſert the name of this Jew, than whom, certainly, there is not a more ancient myſtical author extant amongſt us, and from whom, it ſhould ſeem, that the philoſophiſing Chriſtians drew the greateſt part of their myſtic diſcipline. The principles and maxims, then, of which we have been ſpeaking, having, in the courſe of this century, inſinuated themſelves into the minds of the Egytian Chriſtians, and their teachers and inſtructors beginning alſo to acquire a ſtrong reliſh for the writings of Philo, there ſprung up ſuddenly a two-fold ſpecies of piety and virtue, the one popular and public, the other myſterious and ſecret; as alſo a two-fold order of Chriſtians, the one conſiſting of "Operants," or thoſe who engaged in the labours and buſineſs of life; the other of "Quieſcents," or thoſe who endeavoured, by means of frequent meditation, corporeal mortifications, ſilence, ſolitude, debilitating of the ſenſes, and the like, to deliver the ſoul from

corruptions of ſenſe, and of rendering it fit to be

Moral theology aſſumes a two-fold character.

from the priſon of the body, and unite it to the parent or fountain of all minds. Of each of theſe ſpecies of diſcipline very obvious traces are to be diſcovered in the writings of Clement of Alexandria and Juſtin Martyr, which have as yet, however, been adverted to but by a few, and by ſome even of theſe been wrongly interpreted. By Chriſt. Thomaſius, for inſtance, an author who, on other occaſions, has proved himſelf to be a man of erudition, as well as by ſome others, an accuſation was, not many years back, preferred againſt Juſtin Martyr and other Chriſtian teachers of this and the ſucceeding century, on the ground of their having been guilty of a moſt baſe and ridiculous ſophiſm in maintaining that Chriſt, or the Word, was in all the Grecian philoſophers, and more eſpecially in Socrates, and that through this Chriſt, or Interior Word, theſe men had attained unto everlaſting ſalvation. Vid. *Obſervat. Halenſ. Latin.* tom. ii. obſerv. VII. § xxx. p. 108. & ſeq. It is certain, however, that theſe perſons have rather betrayed their own ignorance of ancient matters, than convicted either Juſtin or his aſſociates of any thing like miſrepreſentation. The reaſoning of Juſtin, according to the Platonic principles which he and other Chriſtians of thoſe times had been led to eſpouſe, was perfectly correct, nor did he, as has been inſinuated, by a kind of amphibology, impoſe either on himſelf or others, but cheriſhed preciſely the ſame opinion reſpecting an indwelling Chriſt, and an Interior Word, as is entertained by the Myſtics of modern times. According to theſe Chriſtian diſciples of Plato and Philo Judæus, Chriſt is the ſame in God that reaſon is in man. Believing, therefore, as they did, that all minds or ſouls originally were parts of and ſprung from the Logos, or Divine Reaſon, an opinion which they had derived partly from the Egyptians and in part from Plato, it could not but follow that they ſhould conſider Chriſt as dwelling in the minds of all men, and as operating and acting in all who followed the dictates of right reaſon. With regard to the conſequences attendant on this, I have not, at preſent, room to enter into any diſcuſſion of them. In diſmiſſing this ſubject, however, I cannot help directing the reader's attention, in a particular manner, to the wonderful influence which country and climate have on men's morals, modes of life, and opinions. The notion of all minds having ſprung from God, and that they were to be brought back to a ſtate of the moſt perfect quieſcence in the boſom of this their firſt

CENT. II.

be admitted into the preſence of the Deity in the

Moral theology aſſumes a two-fold character.

great parent by means of contemplation, and corporeal mortifications, originated in regions where men's bodies are oppreſſed and exſiccated by the ſolar heat, and was communicated from thence to other nations. In thoſe countries, the immoderately fervid ſtate of the atmoſphere renders men averſe to labour or action of any kind; and cauſes them to place their ſupreme felicity in reſt, in contemplation, in a ceſſation from every kind of action of mind as well as of body. As it was impoſſible for them then to regard the Deity in any other light than as ſuperlatively happy, they were naturally led to believe that God himſelf acted in no way whatever, but committed the government of the univerſe to dæmons or genii, and preſerved himſelf in a ſtate of perfect quieſcence, eaſe, and contemplation. Hence proceeded thoſe tenets of the orientals, — of God being like a light of the moſt pure and ſerene nature, — of the world and its inhabitants being committed to the care and guardianſhip of dæmons, — of the abſolute inaction and quietiſm of the Supreme Being, — of the tranquil proceſſion of all things from the Deity, without any decree or exertion on his part, and the like. So prone are mortals, in forming their notions of the Deity, to have too much reſpect for what paſſes within their own boſoms, and to make the contracted ſcale of their own ſenſes a ſtandard whereby to eſtimate the feelings and felicity of Omnipotence.

Again, believing as the people of thoſe countries did, that the minds of men, like all other things, had emanated from God, and were partakers of the divine nature, it was but conſentaneous that they ſhould place the felicity of theſe alſo, and the very height of religion, in contemplation and ſtillneſs, and ſhould both point out the way of attaining to that tranquillity, and alſo pronounce thoſe to be the happieſt and moſt like to God who ſecluded themſelves from the ſociety of men, and turning their backs on the concerns of this world, paſſed their days in a ſtate of moſt ſacred inaction and holy eaſe. Theſe opinions, when they came to be blended with Chriſtianity, gave riſe to a multitude of ſolitary and gloomy characters, who were at firſt chiefly confined to Egypt, but whoſe example, inaſmuch as it carried with it a great appearance of ſanctity, was quickly followed by great numbers in other nations. By the inhabitants of regions

CENT. II.

the realms of everlaſting light and life [*m*].

XXXVI. Religion having thus, in both its branches, the ſpeculative as well as the practical,

Alteration in the form of divine worſhip.

gions where the cold ſtrings the nerves, and invigorates men's bodies ſo as to give them a propenſity to action and labour, a very different notion of the Deity had been formed, and conſequently their conceptions of mental happineſs by no means correſponded with thoſe entertained in more genial climates. Inſtead of a God delighting only in quiet and repoſe, we here find a Deity all buſineſs and activity. Myſtical theology, therefore, the offspring of a burning climate and a ſlothful race of mortals, found, upon its introduction into Europe from the Eaſt, an abundance of admirers and eulogiſts, but no very great number of diſciples who exemplified its precepts in their lives. In point both of morals and inſtitutions there was always a very material difference between our monks and myſtics and thoſe of Egypt, India, Syria, and Arabia. Men born under ſkies like ours, are ſtrangers to that apathy and inertneſs which conſtitute, as it were, the very ſoul of the myſtic diſcipline. Indeed of this wonderful influence of climate we are furniſhed with an illuſtration even in the provinces of Europe alone. For, confining ourſelves merely to this quarter of the globe, we ſhall find that in diſtricts expoſed to the rays of a fervid ſun the votaries and friends of Myſticiſm are numerous, whilſt in countries of a moderate or frigid temperature there are to be met with but very few, if any.

[*m*] That there was a difference between the monks and the aſcetics of the firſt ages, has of late been very generally inſiſted on, and in my opinion on very ſufficient grounds. According to my view of the ſubject, there was certainly not only a difference, but a very great difference, between them. I am bound to confeſs, however, that it appears to me no leſs certain that the monks were derived from the aſcetics. As long as the aſcetic regimen conſiſted merely in continence and an abſtinence from ſenſual gratifications and indulgences, and was unfettered by any of the precepts of the Egyptian philoſophy, there was nothing to prevent men profeſſing it from continuing in ſociety and reſiding in the midſt of their kindred and their families: but when that regimen aſſumed a different aſpect, when it came to be reduced into a ſyſtem, and connected with the philoſophical doctrines reſpecting the nature of the ſoul, and of bodies; when the Aſcetics adopted the belief, that every endeavour

CENT. II.

cal, aſſumed a two-fold character, the one public or common, the other private or myſterious, it

Alteration in the form of divine worſhip.

was to be uſed to ſet free the divine ſpark that lay impriſoned within the body, — to ſubdue the influence of the ſenſes, — to ſeparate the mind from ſenſe, and reſtore it to its firſt original, — to blot from it all ſenſual images, and repreſs in it every tendency to perturbation; — when they came to regard Quietiſm as conſtituting the ſupreme good, — when their doctrines, I ſay, had once aſſumed this character, it was but natural for them to renounce the ſociety of men, and devote themſelves to a life of ſecluſion and ſolitude. For they ſurely could have found nothing more difficult than, amidſt the noiſe of worldly occupations and the frequent interruptions of friends and acquaintance, to regulate their lives according theſe principles, *i. e.* to purify the mind, to repreſs the ſenſes, and to maintain a tranquillity unruffled by any ſort of cogitation or emotion whatever. Theſe principles, which the Aſcetics in Egypt firſt imbibed from the mouths and writings of their teachers towards the cloſe of this century, were by far more widely diffuſed in the ſucceeding one, owing to a love for the Egyptian, or, if the reader would rather, the Alexandrian and Ammonian philoſophy becoming every day more general amongſt the African and Aſiatic Chriſtians. About this period therefore we find the Aſcetics beginning to withdraw themſelves from cities and the ſociety of men, and retiring into ſolitudes and deſerts, and hence they acquired the title of "monks," *i. e.* ſolitary perſons. Vid. Caſſian, *Collation.* xviii. cap. v. p. 517. opp. The reader will not, however, underſtand me as meaning to deny that there had been, even at an earlier period, ſome few who, by way of arriving at a higher degree of ſanctity, had renounced every intercourſe with men, and ſpent their lives in retirement and ſecluſion from the world: for there are many circumſtances which tend to induce in us a belief that ſuch was actually the caſe. But of this there can be no doubt, that until the Chriſtians began to entertain a partiality for that pernicious ſpecies of philoſophy to which we have ſo often adverted, it was by no means deemed neceſſary to forego all intercourſe with the world to attain to even the very higheſt degrees of ſanctity, and that by far the greater part of the Aſcetics never did ſegregate themſelves from the families to which they belonged. When at length the Aſcetics, by way of more readily delivering the impriſoned ſoul from the bondage of the body

CENT. II.

it was not long before a diſtinction of a ſimilar kind took place alſo in the Chriſtian diſcipline,

Alteration in the form of divine worſhip.

body and the ſenſes, and rendering it capable of perceiving and holding communion with the Deity, were led to ſeparate themſelves from all commerce with the world, they by degrees adopted the plan of forming themſelves into ſocieties or colleges, and having agreed on a rule of life correſpondent with their tenets, each ſociety choſe for itſelf a governor, director, or ſuperintendant, to whom the reſt of the collective body might look up for example, advice, and encouragement. Hence the origin of monaſteries and abbeys. — But there were ſome to whom even this kind of ſocial intercourſe, limited as it was, appeared incompatible with the grand deſign of liberating and compoſing the immortal mind. To them there appeared to be danger leſt a community of labours and prayers, nay even the very ſeeing and holding converſe with the brotherhood might awaken the mind to various cogitations and emotions, and thus prevent it from arriving at a ſtate of quiet and repoſe. They, therefore, withdrew into deſerts and caverns, and there devoted themſelves to a life of ſeverity and mortification, a life, in fact, eſtranged from every kind of human ſolace and convenience, and hence they came to be termed "anchorites" or "hermits." I will confirm what I have thus ſaid reſpecting the cauſes which occaſioned the Aſcetics to withdraw from the world and become monks, by the teſtimony of Caſſian as to the end or purpoſe of the monaſtic life, which muſt, in the preſent inſtance, be allowed to poſſeſs the greateſt weight, inaſmuch as it conveys the ſentiments of ſome of the immediate ſucceſſors of theſe firſt Chriſtian monks. For it is well known that Caſſian drew what he records reſpecting monaſtic affairs and inſtitutions from the monks of Egypt, with whom he was particularly converſant. Thus then in *Collation.* ix. ch. ii. p. 360. he introduces the illuſtrious Egyptian Abbat, Iſaac, as expreſſing himſelf: *Omnis monachi finis, cordiſque perfectio ad jugem atque indiſruptam orationis perſeverantiam tendit, et quantum humanæ fragilitati conceditur, ad immobilem tranquillitatem mentis ac perpetuam nititur puritatem. Ob quam poſſidendam, omnem tam laborem corporis, quam contritionem ſpiritus indefeſſe quærimus et jugiter exercemus, et eſt inter alterutrum reciproca quædam inſeparabiliſque conjunctio.* And in chap. iii. *Ab omni diſcurſu atque evagatione lubrica*

CENT. II.

Alteration in the form of divine worſhip.

pline, and form of divine worſhip. For obſerving that in Egypt, as well as in other countries, the heathen worſhippers, in addition to their public religious ceremonies, to which every one was admitted without diſtinction, had cer-

lubrica animus inhibendus, ut ita paulatim ad contemplationem Dei ac ſpiritualis intuitus incipiat ſublimari. In Collation i. which is entitled *de. Monachi intentione*, we find this ſubject treated of at much length by another Egyptian abbat of the name of Moſes, who in chap. iv. p. 219. ſtates, amongſt other things, that, *finis profeſſionis monachorum eſt regnum Dei, ſed deſtinatio eorum eſt illam cordis purificationem quæ ad viſionem Dei ducat.* This he, in chap. viii. p. 221. illuſtrates by the example of Martha and Mary, affirming that a monk ought *a contemplatione aſcendere ad illud quod dicitur unum, id eſt, Dei ſolius intuitum, ut etiam ſanctorum actus et miniſteria mirifica ſupergreſſus, ſolius Dei jam pulchritudine ſcientiaque paſcatur.* Monks, or Myſtics, were, therefore, the offspring of that ſecret moral diſcipline of the Chriſtians which was built upon the Egyptian philoſophical tenets reſpecting the Deity, the world, the ſoul, and the nature of man; and may be placed much on a level with the Eſſenes and Therapeutæ of the Jews. Some faint veſtiges of this are diſcoverable, even at the preſent hour, in the minds and inſtitutions of the monks of Syria, Egypt, and Greece; of which, did I not feel myſelf called upon to bring this note to a ſpeedy concluſion, I could readily adduce very abundant proof. The European monks of our times, on the contrary, appear to have altogether loſt every idea of the cauſes that gave birth to the mode of life which they profeſs, and ſcarcely retain any ſemblance or even ſhadow of primitive manners or regulations. In this, however, there is nothing that ſhould occaſion any great ſurpriſe. Myſtical theology and its offspring, the monaſtic life, are the fruit of an ardent ſun and a parching climate, and, conſequently, not at all calculated to arrive at any degree of maturity in our part of the world. It has uniformly happened, therefore, to all the various orders of monks that have at different times been eſtabliſhed under ſkies ſo temperate as ours, that within a ſhort period they experience no very trifling abatement of their primitive fervor, and ſuffer the precepts and inſtitutions of their founders to become, as it were, a mere dead letter.

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CENT. II.

tain ſecret and moſt ſacred rites, to which they gave the name of "myſteries," and at the celebration of which none, except perſons of the moſt approved faith and diſcretion, were permitted to be preſent, the Alexandrian Chriſtians firſt, and after them others, were beguiled into a notion that they could not do better than make the Chriſtian diſcipline accommodate itſelf to this model. The multitude profeſſing Chriſtianity were therefore divided by them into the "profane," or thoſe who were not as yet admitted to the myſteries, and the "initiated," or faithful and perfect. To the former belonged the "catechumens," or thoſe that had indeed enrolled themſelves under the Chriſtian banner, but had never been regularly received into the fellowſhip of Chriſt's flock by the ſacrament of baptiſm; as alſo thoſe who, for ſome tranſgreſſion or offence had been expelled from communion with the Faithful. The latter, who were properly termed "the church," conſiſted of all ſuch as had been regularly admitted into the Chriſtian community by baptiſm, and had never forfeited their privileges, as well as of thoſe who, having by ſome miſconduct incurred the penalty of excommunication, had, upon their repentance, been again received into the boſom of the church. It became, moreover, cuſtomary, even in this century, more eſpecially in Egypt and the neighbouring provinces, for perſons deſirous of being admitted into either of theſe claſſes, to be previouſly exerciſed and examined, we may even ſay tormented, for a great length of time, with a variety of ceremonies, for the moſt part nearly allied to thoſe that were obſerved in preparing people for a ſight of the heathen myſteries.

Alteration in the form of divine worſhip.

Upon

CENT. II.

Alteration in the form of divine worſhip.

Upon the ſame principle, a two-fold form was given to divine worſhip, the one general and open to the people at large, the other ſpecial and concealed from all, except the faithful or initiated. To the latter belonged the common prayers, baptiſm, the *agapæ* or love-feaſts, and the Lord's-ſupper; and as none were permitted to be preſent at theſe "myſteries," as they were termed, ſave thoſe whoſe admiſſion into the fellowſhip of the church was perfect and complete, ſo likewiſe was it expected that, as a matter of duty, the moſt ſacred ſilence ſhould be obſerved in regard to every thing connected with the celebration of them, and nothing whatever relating thereto be committed to the ears of the profane. From this conſtitution of things it came to paſs, not only that many terms and phraſes made uſe of in the heathen myſteries were transferred and applied to different parts of the Chriſtian worſhip, particularly to the ſacraments of baptiſm and the Lord's-ſupper [*n*], but that, in not a few inſtances the ſacred rites of the church were

[*n*] Inſtances in abundance, of terms and phraſes applied after this manner, are to be found in Clement of Alexandria alone, who ſeems, as it were, to pride himſelf in placing the rites of Chriſtianity on a parallel with the heathen myſteries, and in applying to the former certain terms and modes of expreſſion deduced from the latter. Poſſibly we may not do wrong in referring to this ſource the application of the term "Symbolum" to thoſe profeſſions of faith which were made uſe of to diſtinguiſh the Chriſtians from the reſt of the world. The ſigns or watch-words communicated to thoſe who were admiſſible to the myſteries, in proof of their fraternization, and that they might be readily diſtinguiſhed from impoſtors, were, it is well known, termed "Symbola." The oriental Chriſtians, alſo, of this age were accuſtomed to compare baptiſm with that luſtration with which it was the practice

were contaminated by the introduction of various pagan forms and ceremonies [o]. CENT. II.

XXXVII. As to conſecrate, in a certain degree, thoſe who were about to be initiated in the myſteries; and the profeſſion of faith, delivered at the font, with the watch-word or ſign communicated to the candidates for admiſſion to the ſecret rites of heatheniſm: on which account it was uſual for this profeſſion of faith to be ſolemnly delivered in the very act of baptiſm to every one admitted into the church. Indeed in its operation the profeſſion of faith, to which we allude, was by no means diſſimilar to the ſign of myſtical initiation amongſt the heathen. For as, by means of the latter, thoſe who had been admitted to a participation of the myſteries, were to be diſtinguiſhed from the profane, ſo likewiſe, did that ſum of the Chriſtian religion which newly baptized perſons received at the font ſerve as a mark whereby to know the true faithful, not only from heathen worſhippers, but alſo from the catechumens. To any one allowing to this a due meaſure of attention, I think it will not appear improbable, that the term "Symbol" was one of thoſe things that were adopted by the Chriſtians from the diſcipline of the heathen myſteries. Nothing, certainly, is more common than for two things having ſeveral points of reſemblance, to come in the courſe of time to be diſtinguiſhed by one and the ſame title. Alteration in the form of divine worſhip.

[o] A ſubject highly favourable, as it ſhould ſeem, to the diſplay of literary talent, and, certainly, every way worthy of the attention of a ſcholar well verſed in matters of antiquity, has long offered itſelf to the public in the rites derived by the Chriſtians, from the diſcipline of the myſteries. As yet, however, it has never been regularly taken up by any one. Until this be done, evidence ſufficiently manifeſt and poſitive, as to the fact of the adoption of heathen forms and ceremonies by the Chriſtians, is to be collected from the following authors as well as others; *viz.* Is. Caſaubon. *Exerc.* XVI. *in Annal. Baron.* p. 388. Ia. Tollius, *Inſignib. Itineris Italici; Not.* p. 151. 163. Anton. van Dale, *Diſſ. in Antiquit. & Marmora*, diſſ. I. p. 1. 2. Pet. King, *Hiſt. Apoſt. Creed*, cap. i. § xvi. p. 8. 15. 23. Ez. Spanheim, *Remarques ſur les Empereurs de Julien*, p. 133, 134. 138. 434. & ſeq. Edm. Merill, *Obſervat.* lib. iii. cap. iii. David Clarkſon, *Diſcours ſur les Liturgies*, p. 36. 42, 43. Should any one enquire what cauſes could poſſibly have led the Chriſtian teachers to adopt the rites of paganism, I anſwer, that in all probability

CENT. II.

Chriſtian writers.

XXXVII. As by far a greater number of learned and philoſophical characters were converted to Chriſtianity in the courſe of this century than during the preceding one, it is not to be wondered at, that this period ſhould alſo have had to boaſt of many more authors who conſecrated their talents to the ſervice of the true religion and the edification of the brethren. Numerous, however, as the Chriſtian writers of this age were, but few can be named whoſe works have eſcaped the ravages of time. Of thoſe who wrote in Greek there are three of diſtinguiſhed eminence, namely, Irenæus, Juſtin Martyr, and Clement of Alexandria; men whom, allowing for the times in which they lived, we certainly cannot otherwiſe regard than as learned, eloquent, and gifted with no contemptible degree of genius and talent. The firſt of theſe having paſſed from Aſia Minor into Gaul, was primarily made a preſbyter, and afterwards biſhop, of a ſmall church which had in this century been founded at Lyons. Of his writings in ſupport of the Chriſtian faith, which were not a few, none beſides his *five books againſt hereſies* have come down to our time;

bability their only motive was an anxious deſire to enlarge the bounds of the church. The rites themſelves certainly poſſeſſed no very particular recommendation in point of grandeur or dignity; but a hope might very naturally be entertained that the heathen worſhippers, upon finding ſomewhat of an accordance to ſubſiſt between the religion in which they had been bred up and Chriſtianity, as to externals, might the more readily be prevailed on to diſmiſs their prejudices and embrace the latter. The end propoſed in this caſe was, in itſelf, certainly of the moſt pure and upright nature, and may, therefore, juſtly be entitled to our praiſe; but it muſt at the ſame time be acknowledged that the means made uſe of for attaining it were not equally unexceptionable and praiſeworthy.

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CENT. II. Chriſtian writers.

and indeed theſe (with the exception of the firſt) have reached us merely through the medium of a wretchedly barbarous and obſcure Latin tranſlation [*p*]. The ſecond, who was finally led to embrace Chriſtianity after having tried almoſt every philoſophical ſect, publiſhed, amongſt many other works, *two apologies for the Chriſtians* addreſſed to the emperors Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius, which are not undeſervedly held in very high eſtimation [*q*]. Both of theſe ſuffered martyrdom in the cauſe of

[*p*] Two very ſplendid editions of the books of Irenæus *adverſus Hereſes*, were given to the world ſoon after the commencement of the eighteenth century. The one by the learned Io. Erneſt. Grabe, Oxon. 1702. fol. the other by Ren. Maſſuet, a Benedictine of the congregation of St. Maur. Lutet. Pariſ. 1710. fol. To the laſt are prefixed very ample diſſertations by the editor, in which a variety of things relating to Irenæus and the ſects whoſe principles he combats are brought under examination and illuſtrated. By both of theſe, however, a wide field has been left open to any future editor of Irenæus. Many are the paſſages that ſtill require the hand of a ſagacious emendator, and many are the paſſages that ſtill invite the attention of an erudite and able expoſitor. Each of the above-named editors hath fallen into numerous errors even with regard to the very diſtinction of words.

[*q*] An edition of the works of Juſtin the philoſopher and martyr (we purpoſely omit noticing any editions of particular tracts of his, ſuch as his *two Apologies* and his *Dialogue with Trypho*) was publiſhed at London in the year 1722. fol. by Styan Thirlby, an ingenious writer, but who has omitted every thing that has been improperly attributed to Juſtin. This edition has never been held in much eſtimation. A more ample one was publiſhed at Paris, 1742, fol. by Prudentius Maranus, a Benedictine monk, who has included every thing that goes under the name of Juſtin, and enriched the whole with copious notes and ſome long diſſertations of his own. To Juſtin, moreover, are added the following minor Greek writers of this century, viz. Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus of Antioch, and Hermias, the author of a little book holding up the Greek philoſophers to

CENT. II. Chriſtian writers.

of Chriſt; the latter at Rome under the reign of the emperor Marcus, the former at Lyons during the perſecution of Severus. — The third, a preſbyter of the church of Alexandria, and præfect of the Chriſtian ſchool eſtabliſhed in that city, was a man of various reading, and particularly well verſed in the literature of ancient Greece. Of the numerous works in behalf of Chriſtianity that are aſcribed to him, we poſſeſs merely his *Stromata*, *Pedagogue*, and *Exhortation to the Greeks*. Unfortunately his attachment to philoſophy was ſuch as to lead him into many and very great errors [r]. To theſe three are to be added Theophilus biſhop of Antioch, whoſe *three books to Autolycus* in defence of the

to ridicule, and to which he gave the title of *Irriſio*. The diligence of Prudentius in collecting various readings and paſſages of ancient writers, entitles him certainly to commendation; but he is by no means happy in his judgment of the opinions of Juſtin and others of the fathers, or in his propoſed corrections of the errors of tranſcribers.

[r] A very excellent and beautiful edition of Clemens Alexandrinus was publiſhed by Archbiſhop Potter, Oxon. 1715, fol. The world however has been taught to look for a better and more ample one, to the French Benedictines.

Potter, a man of very great ability, and particularly well ſkilled in Greek literature, has certainly, in an eminent degree, deſerved well of Clement. For he has diſcovered a peculiar felicity in the reſtoration of a great number of paſſages, and aptly illuſtrated many others by quotations from antient authors. Owing, however, to a weakneſs of ſight, and the preſſure of matters of the firſt moment, it was not permitted to this illuſtrious character to do all that, under different circumſtances, he might have accompliſhed. The Latin tranſlation therefore ſtill remains incorrect, and in many parts we have ſtill to lament a want of light and perſpicuity. Very great difficulty is oftentimes to be encountered in developing Clement's meaning, it being frequently involved in much obſcurity, and founded upon maxims or principles at preſent but little known: neither is it by any means an eaſy matter, on many occaſions, to perceive the order and concatenation of his thoughts.

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verity and dignity of the Chriſtian religion are ſtill extant. Tatian, an Aſſyrian philoſopher and orator, of whoſe numerous writings we poſſeſs no other remains than an *Oration addreſſed to the Gentiles* of his time, but which will not be found undeſerving of peruſal, even in the preſent day; and finally Athenagoras, a philoſopher of no mean rank, and præfect of the Chriſtian ſchool of Alexandria, whoſe *Apology for the Chriſtians*, and *Treatiſe concerning the Reſurrection*, have both of them happily eſcaped the ravages of time [*s*]. CENT. II. Chriſtian writers.

Of the Chriſtian Latin writers of this century none of any name or value have reached our days except Tertullian, who was originally a lawyer, but afterwards became a preſbyter of the church of Carthage. Much of ingenuity and acumen undoubtedly diſcovers itſelf in the various treatiſes of this author now extant, which are written partly in defence of the Chriſtian religion againſt its enemies and corrupters; and partly with a view to the reformation of men's morals, and the lighting up within their bo-

[*s*] An edition of Theophilus, ſeparately corrected and illuſtrated, was publiſhed by Io. Chriſt. Wolfe, Hamb. 1724, 8vo. The remains of this Chriſtian writer were again given to the world, with additional annotations and various readings, by Prudentius Maranus at the end of his edition of Juſtin Martyr. Tatian was publiſhed ſeparately by William Worth, Oxon. 1700. 8vo; and Athenagoras by Edw. Dechair, Oxon. 1706, 8vo; both enriched with various annotations of learned men. Nothing certainly can be more beautiful than theſe two editions in point of external form, but of their internal merit we are conſtrained to ſpeak with ſome reſerve: for whether regard be had to the words themſelves, or the ſenſe intended to be conveyed by them, there was certainly abundant room afforded for bringing forward theſe authors to much greater advantage.

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CENT. II.

ſoms a ſpirit of genuine godlineſs and piety; but they are all of them compoſed in a ſtyle, not only tumid and bombaſtic, but beyond all meaſure obſcure. The opinions, moreover, which they exhibit, are harſh, oftentimes uncertain, and not leſs foreign from reaſon than from the ſacred writings. In fine, they plainly indicate him to have been a man of a credulous turn of mind, much addicted to ſeverity, and poſſeſſed of more ſubtilty than ſolid learning [*t*].

Riſe and propagation of Chriſtian ſects. Judaizing Chriſtians.

XXXVIII. Amidſt this mixture of proſperous and untoward circumſtances, and theſe endeavours, on the part of certain teachers, to render letters and philoſophy inſtrumental in giving additional ſtability and recommendation to the

[*t*] Of all the editions of Tertullian's works that of Nic. Rigaltius, Paris, 1641, fol. may be deemed the beſt. The one publiſhed by Ph. Priorius, Paris, 1663, fol. is indeed more enriched with annotations of the learned, but not better or more correct. The two editions which have ſubſequently iſſued from the Venetian preſs are, in point of beauty and elegance, far behind thoſe of Paris: nor is their fidelity always to be relied on. An edition of this very obſcure writer, at once comprehenſive, accurate, and ſufficiently illuſtrated, has long been a deſideratum with the ſtudents of eccleſiaſtical antiquities. — Such an one has at different times been promiſed to the world by men of very eminent abilities, and amongſt the reſt by the Benedictine fraternity, but, unleſs I am altogether deceived, the learned will never be gratified with ſuch an edition of Tertullian as they would wiſh to poſſeſs. For not to notice the obſolete and unuſual terms which he on ſome occaſions ſeems ſtudiouſly to go out of the way for, and equally paſſing over a variety of phraſes connected with juriſprudence, and of which it is ſcarcely to be hoped that any one ſhould give us any ſatisfactory explanation at the preſent day, his thoughts are, in innumerable inſtances, expreſſed in a way ſo conciſe, ſo obſcure, and ſo ambiguous, that we are left in a ſtate of utter uncertainty as to what it is that he means.

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cauſe of Chriſtianity, the church moſt unhappily became divided into various factions and ſects, which had for their authors and leaders a ſet of men who wiſhed rather to take their own wiſdom for a ſtandard than to be guided by the words of Chriſt and his apoſtles. The firſt diſſenſion of this nature that took place, occurred amongſt the Chriſtians of Paleſtine under the reign of the emperor Hadrian. For when Jeruſalem, which had begun in ſome meaſure to revive from its aſhes, was finally razed to the foundation by this emperor, and the whole Jewiſh nation were rendered ſubject to laws of the moſt rigorous caſt, the greateſt part of the Chriſtians inhabiting Paleſtine renounced the law of Moſes, to which they had before paid obedience, and placed themſelves under the guidance of a leader named Marcus, who was not a Jew, but a ſtranger, and whom they appear to have ſelected for the expreſs purpoſe of manifeſting that they meant to have nothing in common with the Jews. Filled with indignation at this proceeding of their brethren, the reſt of the Jewiſh converts, who ſtill retained an immoderate attachment to the law of Moſes, withdrew into that part of Paleſtine which is diſtinguiſhed by the name of Peræa, and there eſtabliſhed a peculiar church of their own, in which the ceremonial law was retained in all its ancient dignity. This church, which could, unqueſtionably, have been but a ſmall one, never attained to any degree of celebrity, but, after having maintained its ground in Paleſtine for ſome centuries, began, not long after the age of Conſtantine the Great, to go back, and gradually dwindled away into nothing [*u*].

CENT. II.

Judaizing Chriſtians.

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[*u*] A very notable paſſage relating to this matter occurs

CENT. II.

XXXIX. Inſignificant, however, as theſe Judaizing Chriſtians, comparatively, were in point of

The Nazarenes and Ebionites.

curs in Sulpitius Severus, *Hiſtor. Sacr.* lib. ii. cap. xxxi. p. 245. *Et quia Chriſtiani* (*i. e.* thoſe living in Paleſtine) *ex Judæis potiſſimum putabantur* (*namque tum Hieroſolymæ non niſi ex circumciſione habebat eccleſia ſacerdotem*) *militum cohortem cuſtodias in perpetuum agitare juſſit, quæ Judæos omnes Hieroſolymæ aditu arceret. Quod quidem Chriſtianæ fidei proficiebat: quia tum pæne omnes Chriſtum Deum ſub legis obſervatione credebant. Nimirum id Domino ordinante, diſpoſitum, ut legis ſervitus a libertate fidei atque eccleſiæ tolleretur. Ita tum primum Marcus ex gentibus apud Hieroſolymam epiſcopus fuit.* Although this paſſage of Sulpitius is neither ſo lucid nor ſo regular as might be wiſhed, it yet clearly points out the origin of that church, which held, that by becoming Chriſtians men did not exonerate themſelves from the neceſſity of obſerving the law of Moſes. For it appears from it; (I.) That the Chriſtians of Jewiſh extraction, reſiding within the confines of Paleſtine, as long as any hope remained that Jeruſalem might recover from its firſt overthrow, were accuſtomed to unite an obſervance of the Moſaic ritual with the worſhip of Chriſt. (II.) That the greateſt part of theſe Chriſtians were, under the reign of Hadrian, when every hope of ſeeing Jeruſalem revive was extinguiſhed, induced to repudiate the law of Moſes, and chooſe one Marcus, a ſtranger, for their biſhop. This, unqueſtionably, they did under an apprehenſion that if they appointed a biſhop of Hebrew origin he might be induced, from an innate attachment to the law of his forefathers, to attempt the gradual reſtoration of thoſe ceremonies which they had come to the determination of for ever renouncing. (III.) That the reaſon which induced theſe Chriſtians to renounce the law of Moſes was the ſeverity of the emperor Hadrian, who had ſurrounded with a military guard the ſpace on which the city of Jeruſalem formerly ſtood, and prohibited the whole race of Jews from having any acceſs thereto. With regard to this point, indeed, Sulpitius is leſs perſpicuous and luculent than could be wiſhed, and is altogether on the reſerve as to many things on which it would have been more judicious in him to have ſpoken out. Upon the whole, however, we can pretty well aſcertain what his meaning is, and without much difficulty ſupply thoſe particulars in reſpect of which he is deficient. The Chriſtians reſiding in Paleſtine, ſo long as they continued to obſerve

of numbers, unanimity was not to be met with amongſt them; for they were divided into two ſects CENT. II.

The Nazarenes and Ebionites.

obſerve the law of Moſes, were looked upon by the Romans as Jews; and certainly not altogether without reaſon. When Hadrian therefore had prohibited the Jews from all acceſs to the ſpot whereon Jeruſalem had formerly ſtood, theſe Chriſtians found themſelves equally interdicted from any approach thereto. But it ſeems that theſe latter felt particularly uneaſy under this reſtraint, and were moſt anxiouſly deſirous to free themſelves from it. They therefore renounced altogether the ceremonies of the Moſaic law, and leſt the Romans might doubt of their ſincerity, they committed the government of their church to one who was not a Jew but a ſtranger. Having thus openly divorced themſelves from every connection with the Jewiſh law, they were permitted by the Romans to have free acceſs to that diſtrict from whence the Jews were altogether excluded. All theſe things, it muſt be admitted, may, with a moderate degree of attention, be collected from Sulpitius notwithſtanding the very great degree of negligence with which he writes. But we ſhall now proceed to make ſome enquiry as to a point on which this author is altogether ſilent; namely, as to what cauſe could poſſibly have excited in theſe Chriſtians ſo very ſtrong a deſire to have acceſs to the ſcite of Jeruſalem, that ſooner than not obtain this object of their wiſhes, they were led to abandon their paternal law and rites, and ſubject themſelves to a man who was not a Jew? Is it to be believed that ſuperſtition could have ſtimulated them to all this? Could they have been prompted by a wiſh to feed and refreſh their minds with a view of thoſe places in which our Bleſſed Saviour had paſſed his life and riſen again from the dead? Could they have been actuated by the belief, which was at one time ſo very general amongſt the Chriſtians, and which continues to be entertained by not a few even in the preſent day, that it conſtitutes not the meaneſt part of religion and piety to viſit ſacred places? But it is abſolutely incredible that men poſſeſſing ſuch a ſtrength of mind as to repudiate the religious ceremonies of their anceſtors, which had been ahered to for ages with the utmoſt ſcrupuloſity, and to commit the ſuperintendance of their ſacred rites and religion to a foreigner, ſhould, at the ſame time, have been ſo weak and ſuperſtitious as to be incapable of enduring the thought of being excluded from thoſe places which Chriſt,

CENT. II. ſects differing widely from each other in their tenets reſpecting Chriſt, and the neceſſity of obedience

The Nazarenes and Ebionites.

whilſt here below, had honoured by his preſence. If ſuch were their character, it might well be ſaid, that in their breaſts ſuperſtition had been oppoſed to ſuperſtition, and that the greater, contrary to all probability, had fallen before the leſſer one. There muſt, unqueſtionably, therefore, have been ſome other reaſon which induced theſe Chriſtians to conſider the liberty of having free acceſs to the ſcite of Jeruſalem as of greater moment than an adherence to their paternal ceremonies and inſtitutions, and not to heſitate at purchaſing this privilege by an utter renunciation of the Moſaic law. Nor do I conceive that much labour or difficulty will be encountered in aſcertaining what this reaſon was. At no very great diſtance from the ſpot whereon Jeruſalem formerly ſtood, the emperor Hadrian had conſtructed a new city bearing the name of Ælia Capitolina, and which had been endowed by him with very conſiderable privileges. Into this new colony the Chriſtians who had fled for refuge to the inſignificant little town of Pella and its neighbourhood, and were daily experiencing great deprivations and inconvenience, felt an anxious deſire to be admitted. But the emperor had peremptorily excluded all the Jewiſh nation from this his newly-built city; and as the Chriſtians who adhered to the law of Moſes were apparently not diſtinguiſhable from Jews, this prohibition was, of courſe, conſidered as extending likewiſe to them. Feeling it then of the firſt importance to their well-being to procure for themſelves the liberty of removing with their effects into the city of Ælia, and of being admitted to the rights of citizenſhip there, a conſiderable number of theſe Chriſtians came to the reſolution of formally renouncing all obedience to the law of Moſes. The immediate author of this meaſure was, in all likelihood, that very Marcus whom they appointed as their biſhop: a man whoſe name evidently ſpeaks him to have been a Roman, and who doubtleſs was not unknown to thoſe of his nation that had the chief command in Paleſtine, and might poſſibly have been related to ſome officer of eminence there. Perceiving, therefore, one of their own nation placed at the head of the Chriſtians, the Roman præfects diſmiſſed at once all apprehenſion of their exciting diſturbance in the newly-eſtabliſhed colony, and from this time ceaſed to regard them as Jews. In conſequence of this favourable alteration in the ſentiments

dience to the law, and poſſibly as to various other matters of opinion. Of theſe the one, namely, that

CENT. II.

The Nazarenes and Ebionites.

of the Romans towards them, the Chriſtians found themſelves no longer debarred from the liberty of ſettling in the newly-founded city, but were, without ſcruple, admitted to a participation of its privileges, which were of the moſt valuable and important nature. In what we have thus ſuggeſted, there is nothing whatever difficult of belief, and it muſt certainly be allowed to receive a ſanction of no little weight from what we find expreſsly recorded by Epiphanius, *de Ponderibus et Menſuris*, § xv. p. 171. that the Chriſtians, upon their renouncing the law of Moſes, were ſuffered to remove from Pella to Jeruſalem. By Jeruſalem we muſt underſtand the emperor Hadrian's new city, which, poſterior to the time of Conſtantine the Great, inſenſibly loſt the name of Ælia Capitolina, and acquired that of Jeruſalem. Vid. Henr. Valeſius, *Adnot. ad Euſebium*, p. 61. But even if no memorial of this were extant, no room whatever could be afforded for controverſy. For it is indiſputably certain, that from the time of Hadrian there exiſted a Chriſtian church of celebrity at Ælia, and that the prelates, who were commonly termed biſhops of Jeruſalem, were in point of fact biſhops of Ælia. I muſt beg the reader, however, not to underſtand me as meaning that the Chriſtians of Paleſtine, in renouncing the law of Moſes, were influenced ſolely by a wiſh to obtain the liberty of removing into the city of Ælia. Without doubt, that Marcus, at whoſe inſtance they were prevailed on to renounce the law of Moſes, made it appear to them, by irrefragable arguments, that the authority and dignity of the Moſaic ritual had been aboliſhed by the coming of the Meſſiah. By men, however, who had been accuſtomed, even from their tendereſt years, to regard the law of Moſes with the higheſt degree of veneration, his arguments would have been received with leſs effect had they not been ſeconded by a proſpect of being admitted to a ſhare in the privileges of Ælia, and of thus obtaining a deliverance from the oppreſſions and numerous other evils to which the Jews were at this period ſubjected; or if the ſecond and complete ſubverſion of Jeruſalem by Hadrian had not extinguiſhed every hope of ſeeing the temple rebuilt, and the Jewiſh nation reinſtated in the privilege of worſhipping God on that ſpot, after its accuſtomed manner. Sulpitius does not add that this remarkable defection from the obſervances of their forefathers was not general amongſt

CENT. II.

The Nazarenes and Ebionites.

that of the Nazarenes, is not conſidered by ancient Chriſtian writers as coming within the claſs of heretics; but the other, that of the Ebionites, is uniformly reckoned in the catalogue of thoſe ſects whoſe principles ſtrike at the very fundamentals of the Chriſtian faith. Neither of them adopted thoſe accounts of our Bleſſed Saviour's life which were held ſacred by other Chriſtians, but each had a peculiar goſpel of its own, differing in ſeveral reſpects from that which we regard as genuine [*v*]. By the

the Chriſtians of Judæa, but that a part of them ſtill remained invincibly attached to the Moſaic law, and withdrew from every intercourſe with thoſe of their brethren who had renounced it. Indeed there was no occaſion for his noticing this, inaſmuch as the thing was notorious. Nothing, in fact, can be better atteſted than that there exiſted in Paleſtine two Chriſtian churches, by the one of which an obſervance of the Moſaic law was retained, and by the other diſregarded. This diviſion amongſt the Chriſtians of Jewiſh origin, did not take place before the time of Hadrian, for it can be aſcertained, that previouſly to his reign the Chriſtians of Paleſtine were unanimous in an adherence to the ceremonious obſervances of their forefathers. There can be no doubt, therefore, but that this ſeparation originated in the major part of them having been prevailed on by Marcus to renounce the Moſaic ritual, by way of getting rid of the numerous inconveniences to which they were expoſed, and procuring for themſelves a reception, as citizens, into the newly-founded colony of Ælia Capitolina.

[*v*] That the goſpel of the Nazarenes was not the ſame with that of the Ebionites, is moſt clearly manifeſt from the few notices reſpecting each of them that are to be met with in ancient writers. Vid. Jo. Albert. Fabricius, *Cod. Apocryph. Nov. Teſt.* tom. i. p. 355. et ſeq. In the goſpel of the Ebionites, for inſtance, to paſs over other things, the firſt two chapters of St. Matthew were omitted, whereas it appears from St. Jerome that theſe chapters formed a part of the goſpel of the Nazarenes. The reader will find this ſubject more particularly adverted to in my *Vindicia Antiquæ Chriſtianorum Diſciplinæ contra Tolandi Nazarenum*,

the Nazarenes [*w*], our Bleſſed Saviour was conſidered, not only as having been generated of

CENT. II.

The Nazarenes and Ebionites.

renum, ſect. i. cap. v. p. 112. Setting aſide the actual difference of their tenets, this one fact is ſufficient to prove that the Ebionites and Nazarenes were two ſeparate and diſtinct ſects.

[*w*] Epiphanius is the firſt who ranks the Nazarenes in the claſs of heretics. By more ancient writers the Ebionites are conſidered as of that deſcription, but not the Nazarenes. The reaſon of this I ſuſpect to have been, that the Chriſtians, previouſly to the time of Conſtantine the Great, although they might regard the Nazarenes as brethren labouring under a degree of error, yet never conſidered them as corrupters of the Chriſtian faith: nor will this appear extraordinary to thoſe who are in the leaſt converſant with Chriſtian antiquities. For the tenets of the Nazarenes reſpecting Chriſt were by far more juſt and correct than thoſe of the Ebionites, and, although they would have deemed it inexcuſable in themſelves to neglect the ceremonial obſervances of the law of Moſes, they yet by no means exacted an obedience to the Jewiſh ritual from thoſe who were not of the Hebrew race. But Jews of this deſcription, who were contented with obſerving the law themſelves, and ſought not to impoſe it on others, were, in the ſecond and third centuries, looked upon as genuine Chriſtians, and deemed not unworthy of the name of brethren. This is clearly intimated by Juſtin Martyr, *Dial. cum Tryph.* p. 136. edit. Jebbian. For being interrogated by Trypho in his diſputation with him, whether thoſe Jews who, notwithſtanding that they had embraced the Chriſtian faith, continued ſteadfaſt in their obſervance of the law of Moſes, could obtain ſalvation? he thus replies: λέγω ὅτι σωθήσεται τοιοῦτος, ἐὰν μὴ τοὺς ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους ἐκπαντὸς πείθειν ἀγωνίζηται τᾶυτα αὐτῶ φυλάσσειν, λέγων εἰ σωθήσεσθαι αὐτοὺς, ἐὰν μὴ ταῦτα φυλάξωσιν. *Ego quidem ſalvatum talem iri aio, qui alios homines in ſententiam ſuam adducere anniſus non fuerit, non ſervatum eos iri affirmans niſi eadem* (the law,) *ſecum ſervaverint.* Many more things of this kind are to be found in Juſtin's dialogue; but at the ſame time he does not diſſemble that there were ſome who were leſs liberal in their determination of this point. But, poſſibly, it may be objected by ſome that the Nazarenes were anciently included under the name of Ebionites: nor is this objection altogether deſtitute of colour. For it is certain, that the

CENT. II. of a virgin, but alſo as partaking, in a certain

The Nazarenes and Ebionites.

writers of the ſecond and third centuries occaſionally made uſe of the term Ebionites in a much more comprehenſive ſenſe than we find it bearing in works of a more recent date. In fact it ſhould ſeem that, at that early period, the denomination of Ebionites was applied indiſcriminately to all ſuch Jews, as notwithſtanding their converſion to Chriſtianity, continued to obſerve the law of Moſes. Vid. Origen *contra Celſum*, lib. iii. opp. tom. ii. p. 385. Hence it comes to paſs that we find the Ebionites of thoſe times diſtributed into two claſſes, the orthodox, and the heretical; into thoſe who believed our Bleſſed Saviour to have been born of a virgin, and thoſe who denied this. Vid. Origen *contra Celſ.* lib. v. tom. ii. opp. p. 625. Euſebius, *Hiſtor. Eccleſ.* lib. iii. cap. xvii. p. 99. Theodoret, *Fabul. Hæretic.* § ii. cap i. p. 219. et ſeq. But when I take into conſideration what is ſaid by Irenæus and others on the ſubject of the Ebionites, I cannot help giving the preference to the opinion which I have firſt above ſtated reſpecting them. The term Nazarene, moreover, with theſe men had preciſely the ſame import as that of Chriſtian has with us. For being Jews, and ſpeaking only the Hebrew language, they found a difficulty in naturaliſing the word *Chriſtianus*, which is of Greek origin, and therefore ſubſtituted *Nazaræus*, a term bearing equal relation to our Saviour Chriſt, in its room. St. Matthew in his Goſpel, chap. ii. 23. ſtates it as a prediction of the prophets of the Old Teſtament, that the Meſſiah ſhould be called a Nazarene. Under the ſanction of this authority then, theſe Judaizing Chriſtians thought themſelves warranted in aſſuming the title of Nazarenes, juſt in the ſame way as the Greek converts had taken the denomination of Chriſtians from the Redeemer's title of Χριστὸς. Either term alike indicates the diſciples or followers of that Meſſiah who had been promiſed of old to the Jewiſh nation. Hence we may collect the ſenſe in which we ought to underſtand what Epiphanius has recorded reſpecting the Nazarenes. *Hæreſ.* xxix. § vi. διὰ τὶ Χριστιανὸς ἐκτὸς ἐπονόμασαν, ἀλλὰ Ναζωραίους. *Nolunt Chriſtiani vocari, ſed Nazaræi.* Being Jews, they felt a repugnance to adopt a Greek denomination, but ſelected a Hebrew term of ſimilar import and ſignificance, and one that appeared to them of an equally honourable nature, ſince it was no uncommon thing for our Lord to be ſtyled a Nazarene; and inſtances had occurred even of his having applied this appellation to himſelf. In this, certainly, there was nothing whatever that could reaſonably be imputed to them as a fault.

degree,

degree, of the divine nature [x]. The rites inſtituted by Moſes, they regarded as ſtill neceſſary to be obſerved by all Chriſtians of the Hebrew race, but they did not exact a conformity to the Jewiſh law from ſuch as were of a different origin: neither did they conſider the additions that had been made to the Moſaic ritual at different times, by certain maſters

CENT. II.

The Nazarenes and Ebionites.

[x] What the preciſe opinion entertained by the Nazarenes, reſpecting Chriſt, was, is not altogether clear. Many of our moſt eminent ſcholars, ſuch as Grotius, Voſſius, Spencer, and Huet, conceive them to have been altogether exempt from error in their notions on this ſubject, and that their belief was in no reſpect different from ours as to the union of two natures in Chriſt, the one human, the other divine. By no one has this orthodoxy of the Nazarenes been vindicated with greater learning and ability than by Mich. Lequien, in his *Adnot. ad Damaſcen.* tom. i. p. 82, 83. as well as in a particular diſſertation *de Nazarenis et eorum Fide*, which is the ſeventh of thoſe that he has annexed to his edition of Damaſcene's works. Nothing whatever has been ſuffered to eſcape his diligence that could poſſibly aid in demonſtrating that the Nazarenes' belief reſpecting Chriſt was equally correct with our own. But none of all the proofs which he adduces from ancient authors can be ſaid ſo far to eſtabliſh the fact as to leave no room for doubt. Manifeſt, indeed, it is, that the Nazarenes regarded our Bleſſed Lord as of a higher and more exalted nature than a mere man; and that they looked upon him as having been begotten of a virgin by the omnipotent will of the Deity, and admitted him to be, in a certain ſenſe, the Son of God, endowed with divine power. But whether they believed him to have had an exiſtence prior to Mary, and that God and man were united in his perſon, admits of very conſiderable doubt. In fact the ſenſe of all the paſſages that have been brought forward by men of erudition with a view to eſtabliſh this, is very uncertain and equivocal. On the contrary there are ſome paſſages in ancient authors which appear to furniſh ſufficient proof of the Nazarenes having denied the divinity of Chriſt. See, for example, Origen's diſcourſe *de Duobus Cæcis*, tom. i. opp. p. 427. edit. Huet.

and

CENT. II. and doctors of the law, as deſerving of any ſort of reſpect, but treated them as things that ought to be either aboliſhed or at leaſt ſuffered to ſink into oblivion [y].

The Nazarenes and Ebionites.

XL. The Ebionites, who derived their name either from ſome man, or from ſome particular fact or opinion [z], were a ſect of a much worſe deſcription

[y] That the Nazarenes were averſe to the rites and inſtitutions which had been added to the Moſaic precepts by the Phariſees and interpreters of the law; and that they conſidered nothing as obligatory except the genuine commands of the great Hebrew legiſlator, is abundantly manifeſt from the teſtimony of St. Jerome, who had not only read their books, but lived on terms of familiarity with them. Vid. *Com. in Eſaiam*, tom. ii. opp. p. 34. & 106. But whether they conſidered the law of Moſes as of general obligation, or as binding on the Jews excluſively, remains as yet a queſtion with the learned. For my own part, I feel not the leaſt heſitation in declaring my aſſent to the opinion that the Nazarenes believed the Moſaic law to be obligatory on no other Chriſtians than thoſe who were deſcendants of the ſtock of Abraham. And a principal reaſon with me for acceding to this opinion is, that St. Jerome, who was intimately acquainted with their principles and tenets, repreſents them as having entertained the higheſt veneration for St. Paul, and as having aſſigned him a diſtinguiſhed place amongſt thoſe whom they regarded as teachers of celeſtial truth. Hieron. *Com. in Eſaiam*, tom. ii. p. 35. For how could it be poſſible that the great apoſtle of the Gentiles, who laboured with ſuch zeal in proving that the law of Moſes ought not to retain its ancient force and authority, ſhould have been commended and held in high eſtimation by men who conſidered obedience to that law as indiſpenſable in every one who would arrive at ſalvation? Not a doubt can exiſt but that the Ebionites, who would willingly have impoſed an obſervance of the Moſaic law on the chriſtians in general, execrated St. Paul as an impious impugner of that law. This argument is of greater ſtrength and weight than to be ſhaken by certain *dicta* of St. Auguſtine or others, that by a forced interpretation may be made to militate againſt it.

[z] Tertullian, and, after him, many other ancient Chriſtian

deſcription than that of the Nazarenes. For in the firſt place, although they held our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, in great veneration as a divine legate or prophet, they would not admit that any miraculous circumſtances attended his birth, but maintained that he was the natural ſon of

CENT. II.

The Ebionites.

tian writers derive the appellation of "Ebionites" from ſome man. Vid. Jo. Albert. Fabricius, *Adnot. ad Philaſtrum de Hereſ.* p. 81. & ſeq. Neither is there any difficulty in believing that ſome Jew of the name of Ebion might have been the author of thoſe tenets by which the Ebionites were diſtinguiſhed from other Chriſtians of the Hebrew race. But inaſmuch as Origen, *Philocal.* cap. i. p. 17. who is followed by Euſebius, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. iii. cap. xxvii. p. 99. ſtates this ſect to have acquired the title of "Ebionites" or "paupers" from the low and abject ſentiments which they entertained reſpecting Chriſt; and the ſame Origen, in another place, *contra Celſum*, lib. ii. p. 56. accounts for the name from their attachment to the indigent and inſufficient law of Moſes; and laſtly, ſince the Ebionites themſelves, as is obſerved by Epiphanius, *Hæreſ.* xxx. § xvii. p. 141. conſidered the name to have had an alluſion to the poverty and needineſs of their anceſtors, certain of the learned have conceived that more credit is due to theſe opinions than to the former one, although they at the ſame time betray an utter ignorance as to which of theſe latter is moſt to be relied on. Were it to be left to me to determine this point, I ſhould at once give the preference to the opinion of the Ebionites themſelves; for nothing can be more certain than that by far the greateſt number of thoſe Chriſtians of Jeruſalem, from whom the Ebionites were deſcended, were involved in a ſtate of indigence; nor is it at all unlikely that this their poverty might have been caſt in their teeth by the reſt of their brethren and finally have given riſe to a taunting ignominious appellation. Origen and Euſebius, as may be gathered even from the inconſiſtency of the former in his explication of this name, convey no information that can be depended on, as to the origin of the term Ebionites, but merely give us their own interpretation of the word, or point out how aptly it appears to reconcile itſelf with the tenets of the ſect. But as this queſtion reſpecting the origin of the term Ebionites is, in fact, of no very great importance, I prefer leaving it undetermined, to engaging in any controverſy on the ſubject.

Joſeph

CENT. II.

The Ebionites.

Joſeph and Mary, begotten according to that law by which all other mortals are produced. In the next place they not only obſerved the Moſaic law of ceremonies in all particulars themſelves, but alſo inſiſted on its being requiſite for every one who would obtain favour with God, to do the like. St. Paul, therefore, who had ſo ſtrenuouſly exerted himſelf in demonſtrating that no neceſſity exiſted for conforming to the Moſaic ritual, it may eaſily be believed, found but little favour with them. Laſtly, they refuſed to give up even the ſuperſtitious appendages which had been added to the inſtitutions of Moſes by the Phariſees and doctors of the law [*a*].

XLI. From

[*a*] In the ſtatement which I here ſubmit to the reader reſpecting the Ebionites, I am borne out, in ſeveral particulars expreſsly, and as to others in no very obſcure terms, by Irenæus, and the beſt Chriſtian writers of the early ages. With regard to the laſt circumſtance noticed, namely, that of their having retained, in addition to the rites preſcribed by Moſes, the ſuperſtitious obſervances and practices introduced by the Phariſees, in oppoſition to the Nazarenes, by whom theſe innovations were utterly lopped off and diſcarded, it may indeed appear to a curſory examiner of the authors above alluded to, to admit of ſome doubt. An attentive conſideration, however, of the following words of Irenæus will, I think, place the matter out of all diſpute. *Et circumciduntur ac perſeverant in his conſuetudinibus, quæ ſunt ſecundum legem et Judaico charactere vitæ.* Lib. i. *adv. Hæreſ.* cap. xxvi. p. 105. & ſeq. Irenæus here obviouſly makes a diſtinction between an obſervance of the precepts of the law and the Jewiſh mode or character of life, and repreſents the Ebionites as conforming no leſs to the one than the other. But as to this Jewiſh character, or mode of life diſtinct from the precepts of the law of Moſes, what elſe can it mean than that rule of life and morals which had been impoſed on the necks of the Jewiſh multitude by their maſters and doctors as a ſort of ſecondary law? What Irenæus adds of their having worſhipped the city of Jeruſalem as the immediate reſidence of the Deity, I conſider as indiſputably

CENT. II.

Sects generated of the oriental philoſophy.

XLI. From the inſignificant and obſcure ſects, which we have thus enumerated, unſupported as they were by any conſiderable degree either of talents or authority, the Chriſtian church experienced comparatively but little detriment. By far the greater part of the ill-will and malignity which it had to encounter from without, as well as of the diſcord and diſſenſions, by which it was internally diſtracted and diſturbed, is undoubtedly to be attributed to thoſe who were for expounding the religion of Chriſt upon the principles of the oriental philoſophy. During the firſt century theſe men can ſcarcely be ſaid to have emerged from obſcurity: they

putably falſe and injurious. For it was never held lawful by the Jews to worſhip, even in the ſlighteſt degree, any thing except the one true and living God. What gave occaſion to this calumny was their cuſtom of turning always towards the ſcite of Jeruſalem when they offered up their prayers. Prior to the war of Hadrian there can be no doubt but that the Jews were accuſtomed to reſort, for the purpoſes of prayer, to the ſpot whereon the temple had formerly ſtood, in order that they might conform themſelves, as far as poſſible, to the cuſtom of their forefathers and the ancient religious diſcipline of their nation. But even this miſerable conſolation was wreſted from them by Hadrian, who by a ſevere edict forbad any Jews to approach Jeruſalem, and ſurrounded the whole area of the temple and the holy city with a military guard. Nothing more was left then to this afflicted people, ſo fondly attached to the practices of their anceſtors, than, when engaged in prayer, to turn their faces towards the ſpot where once had ſtood their city and their temple.

Epiphanius, *Hæreſ.* xxx. in treating of the Ebionites, attributes to them many other errors than thoſe above enumerated, amongſt which are to be found ſeveral, not only of a ſilly, but of the very groſſeſt nature. He, however, takes care to appriſe his readers, § iii. p. 127. & § xiv. p. 141. that his remarks reſpect the Sampſæans and the Elceſaites as well as the Ebionites, and that the primitive Ebionites were entire ſtrangers to any ſuch heretical opinions. It would be wrong therefore to blend thoſe doctrines with the tenets of the Ebionites.

lived

CENT. II.

Sects generated of the oriental philoſophy.

lived unnoticed and the converts that they made were but few; but under the reign of Hadrian, the apoſtles, and the principal of their diſciples being dead, they began to take courage, and by degrees ſucceeded in forming numerous congregations of their followers in various of the provinces; and indeed did not reſt ſatisfied with merely inſtituting theſe aſſociations, but left no means uneſſayed that might contribute either to their reputation, their ſtability, or their increaſe [*b*]. Under the banners of theſe new ſects great numbers of Chriſtians, who had previouſly entertained none but ſound opinions, were tempted to enrol themſelves, being ſeduced, in part by a fanatical kind of eloquence that characteriſed many of their leaders, in part by the very great ſhew of piety exhibited by others, and in part by the proſpect of being countenanced in living more at their eaſe and ſinning without controul. A no leſs diſaſtrous evil attending the riſe of the Gnoſtics was, that both the Jews and the heathens, conſidering the diſgraceful maxims and tenets of theſe ſectaries as the genuine princi-

[*b*] Several of the more early Chriſtian writers have left it on record, that under the reign of Hadrian, when the Apoſtles were all dead, the Gnoſtic ſects, that had previouſly languiſhed in obſcurity, began to emerge from their concealment; and that by the exertions which they uſed in gaining proſelytes, and eſtabliſhing congregations of their followers, the cauſe of genuine Chriſtianity was moſt ſadly diſturbed and impeded. Vid. Clemens Alex. lib. vii. *Stromat.* cap. xvii. p. 898. & ſeq. Cyprian. *Epiſt.* lxxv. p. 144. ed. Baluzian. Hegeſippus apud Euſeb. *Hiſt. Eccl.* lib. iii. cap. xxxii. p. 104. & lib. iv. cap. xxii. p. 142. although as to the ſenſe of this latter paſſage the learned are not exactly agreed. The admiſſion of this teſtimony is unavoidable, inaſmuch as we meet with nothing in other writers at all repugnant to it, and the origin of none of the Gnoſtic ſects, except that of the Cerinthians, can be traced higher than to the age of Hadrian.

ples of Chriſtianity, were led to regard the religion of the goſpel with increaſing hatred and contempt: ſo that the Chriſtian teachers were thenceforward neceſſarily compelled to employ a conſiderable portion of the time allotted to the eſtabliſhment and propagation of the faith, in repreſſing the progreſs of Gnoſticiſm, and in expoſing, through the medium of writings and diſputations, the inſane pretenſions and principles maintained by its abettors [*c*].

CENT. II.

Sects generated of the oriental philoſophy.

XLII. This

[*c*] The Greeks and Romans, who were ſtrangers to the genuine principles of Chriſtianity, erroneouſly conceived that the maxims and tenets of the Gnoſtics were thoſe of the Chriſtians at large. Many of theſe maxims and tenets, however, were not only fooliſh and ridiculous, but fundamentally vile and diſgraceful, and hence it came to paſs, that the Chriſtians were looked upon either as perſons devoid of reaſon and worthy only to be held in deriſion, or elſe as a ſet of unprincipled wretches that could not be treated with too much ſeverity. The teſtimony of many of the ancient fathers might be cited as to this, but I ſhall content myſelf with adducing only one paſſage out of Irenæus *adverſ. Hæreſ.* lib. i. cap. xxiv. *ad detractionem divini eccleſiæ nominis, quemadmodum et gentes, a Satana præmiſſi ſunt,* (he is ſpeaking of the Carpocratians, a Gnoſtic ſect of infamous memory) *uti ſecundum alium modum, quæ ſunt illorum audientes homines, et putantes omnes nos tales eſſe, avertant aures ſuas a præconio veritatis, aut, et videntes, quæ ſunt illorum, omnes nos blaſphement, in nullo eis communicantes, neque in doctrina, neque in moribus, neque in quotidiana converſatione. Sed vitam quidem luxurioſam, ſententiam impiam* (habentes) *ad velamen malitiæ ipſorum nomine* (Chriſtianorum) *abutuntur.* The caſe was much the ſame with the Jews who had ſettled amongſt the Greeks and Romans without the confines of Paleſtine. For many of theſe, who were at firſt far from being equally prejudiced againſt Chriſtianity with the reſt of their brethren, upon hearing the Gnoſtics maintain, that the God of the Hebrews and of the Old Teſtament was a different being from the True and Supreme God, — that nothing like divine authority or dignity could properly be attributed either to Moſes or his law, — that the God of the Jews was indeed an angel endowed with vaſt power, but devoid of clemency

CENT. II.

Gnoſtic ſects.

XLII. This buſineſs of arreſting the progreſs of Gnoſticiſm amongſt the multitude, became every day a concern of ſtill wider extent, and attended with increaſing difficulties, in conſequence of the numerous diſſenſions, diſputes, and ſeparations that were continually taking place amongſt the votaries of the oriental philoſophy. For notwithſtanding all of thoſe who looked upon the Creator of the world as a different being from the Deity, may be conſidered as having commenced their career upon nearly one and the ſame ſet of principles, yet they had proceeded but a little way when as many of them as preferred following their own judgment rather than any other man's, ſtruck off into different paths, and not only gave to the philoſophy which they had eſpouſed a diverſity of modification in itſelf, but alſo introduced variations in the manner of reconciling and connecting it with the Chriſtian religion. Hence were generated diſagreements, diſputations, and controverſies, which ſoon gave riſe to factions, parties, and ſects that were continually at ſtrife with each other. It is by no means eaſy to determine as to the number of theſe ſects. There ſeems, indeed, to be but little hazard in our conſidering them as having been leſs numerous than they are repreſented

clemency and wiſdom, and a ſlave to the luſt of dominion, — that the reſurrection of the dead was undeſerving of belief, — that matter was intrinſecally corrupt, and, conſequently, all bodies inherently vicious and depraved, I ſay, upon hearing the Gnoſtics avow not only theſe but various other principles and maxims diametrically oppoſite to the religious tenets of the Jews; and haſtily running away with the idea that ſuch was the way in which Chriſt had inſtructed his diſciples to think and believe, they were led to regard the Chriſtian religion with every poſſible degree of hatred and diſguſt.

by

by ancient authors; but at the ſame time it is certain, that the greateſt diſcord prevailed amongſt the Gnoſtics, and that the ſects generated by this diſcord were not a few [*d*]. Owing to the inconſiſtency and obſcurity of ancient authors, we find ourſelves equally in the dark as to the preciſe time when either of theſe ſects individually was formed, or the circumſtances that attended its riſe: but ſince it is certain that all of them, which attained to any degree of conſequence or celebrity, were in a flouriſhing ſtate ſo early as the middle of this century, it is not to be doubted but that the principal of them muſt have been inſtituted not long ſubſequent to its commencement.

CENT. II.

Gnoſtic ſects.

[*d*] It ſeems not at all improbable that the ancient Chriſtian teachers, in conſequence of their not obſerving a due degree of caution in diſtinguiſhing between the Gnoſtic ſects might multiply them without reaſon. Each ſect, moſt likely, was at the firſt known by a variety of names; one perhaps derived from the place where it originated, another from its founder, and another again from ſome particular tenet or leading principle: and it is certainly very poſſible that, from their either not ſufficiently attending to this circumſtance, or perhaps being entirely unacquainted with it, thoſe who made it their buſineſs to oppoſe theſe ſects might fall into the error of repreſenting them as much more numerous than they actually were. It ſhould ſeem, alſo, that certain of theſe ſects were known by different names in different parts of the world; by one, for inſtance, in Syria, by another in Egypt, and by a third, poſſibly, in ſome of the other provinces: a portion of this or that particular ſect, moreover, it is probable might acquire a peculiar denomination from ſome eminent teacher to whom they might have attached themſelves. Men, by far more ſagacious than the ancient Chriſtian paſtors were, have been frequently impoſed upon in matters of this kind, and been led to believe in the exiſtence of a much greater number of ſects than ever had any being. Even modern eccleſiaſtical hiſtory ſupplies us with a remarkable inſtance in illuſtration of this in the caſe of the Anabaptiſts.

CENT. II.

The Elceſaites.

XLIII. In bringing ſome of the principal of theſe ſects under review we find our attention firſt called towards the Elceſaites, whoſe founder, according to Epiphanius, was a Jew named Elxai, who, under the reign of Trajan, ſo ſucceſsfully ingratiated himſelf with a Jewiſh ſect, named the Oſſens, as to make converts of them all, and prevail on them, in a body, to adopt his errors. This man, although a Jew, and of courſe a worſhipper of the one only true God, yet contrived to blend much of the ſuperſtitions of the eaſt with the religion of his forefathers; and, amongſt other things, proteſted altogether againſt the uſe of ſacrifices, contending that the offering up of victims to the Deity was a practice to which the patriarchs of old were utter ſtrangers. This circumſtance, conſidering that in other reſpects he manifeſted a reverence for Moſes, and adhered ſtrictly to the Jewiſh ritual, ſeems to indicate his having belonged to the ſect of the Eſſenes, who pretended that the law of Moſes ought not to be taken literally, but that there was a recondite ſyſtem of morality concealed beneath its precepts. It is, however, not by any means certain, as even Epiphanius himſelf allows, that the Elceſaites were a Chriſtian ſect. Elxai, it is true, in a book which Epiphanius had ſeen, ſpeaks in a general way of Chriſt, and beſtows on him very high encomiums, but nothing whatever is added from whence it can be aſcertained whether or not he meant, under that title, to ſpeak of Jeſus of Nazareth. This certainly is not characteriſtic of a Chriſtian; and I, therefore, for my own part, entertain not the leaſt doubt but that the Elceſaites were

were a Jewiſh ſect, and ſome branch of the Eſſenes [*e*]. CENT. II.

XLIV. If the Elceſaites then be conſidered as not coming properly within the deſcription of a Chriſtian ſect, we are certainly bound, in marſhalling the leaders of the different Gnoſtic factions, to aſſign the firſt place to Saturninus of Antioch, whom the early Chriſtian writers repreſent as having been a diſciple of the Samaritan Menander; a circumſtance which, though it cannot well be believed, muſt yet be allowed to poſſeſs no inconſiderable weight as an argument in favour of the antiquity of his ſect [*f*]. This man, previouſly to his becoming a Chriſtian, belonged to that claſs of philoſophers who believed that, in addition to the Deity, of whom they pretended that no one had any knowledge, there had exiſted from all eternity, a material principle intrinſically evil and corrupt, over which preſided

The philoſophy of Saturninus.

[*e*] Epiphanius, *Hæreſ.* xix. § iii. p. 41. Euſebius, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. vi. c. xxxviii. p. 234. Theodoret. *Fabul. Hæret.* lib. ii. c. vii. p. 221. & ſeq.

[*f*] If Saturninus had been a diſciple of Menander, propriety would have required that his ſect ſhould have been referred to the firſt century; and amongſt the learned there have not been wanting ſeveral, as Le Clerc and others, who, upon this ſingle ground alone, have been actually induced to refer it to that age. But in this inſtance too haſty and implicit a reliance has certainly been placed on thoſe ancient writers who repreſent Saturninus as having been educated under Menander. For firſt, the diſcipline of Menander differs moſt materially from that which Saturninus profeſſed; and in the next place, Menander, as I have above ſhewn, cannot, with the leaſt propriety, be conſidered as coming within the deſcription of a Chriſtian heretic. Much rather therefore may we credit the teſtimony of Euſebius, *Hiſt. Eccl.* lib. iv. cap. vii. and Theodoret. *Fabular. Hæretic.* lib. i. cap. ii. p. 193. by both of whom Saturninus is expreſsly repreſented as having flouriſhed under the reign of the emperor Hadrian.

CENT. II.

The philoſophy of Saturninus.

a certain governor or prince. This world, and the firſt parents of the human race, he ſuppoſed to have been created by ſeven angels, without the knowledge of the Supreme Deity. Theſe ſeven ſpirits, there can be no doubt, were the ſame with thoſe powerful genii begotten of God, whom the people of the eaſt conceived to reſide in and rule over the ſeven planets or moveable ſtars; for that ſuch were the founders of this nether world, was an opinion entertained by various others of the Gnoſtics. The fabric of the world, when completed, did not appear diſpleaſing in the ſight of the Almighty, wherefore he breathed into man, who as yet was endowed with nothing beyond mere animal life, a rational ſoul; and having divided the newly-created world into ſeven diſtricts, he permitted the ſeven angels by whom it had been faſhioned, to aſſume the dominion thereof, reſerving, however, to himſelf a ſupreme and irreſiſtible command over the whole. One of theſe angels, Saturninus held to be the ruler of the Hebrew nation, the being that brought them up out of the land of Egypt by the hand of Moſes, and afterwards gave them a law, and whom the Jews, therefore, not knowing any thing of the Supreme Deity, ignorantly paid their adoration to as God. To Satan, or the ruler who preſided over matter, this creation of the world and the human race was in the higheſt degree diſpleaſing; wherefore, being ſtimulated by hatred and emulation, he contrived to introduce upon earth, in oppoſition to the human beings on whom the Deity had beſtowed a rational and virtuouſly diſpoſed ſoul, another race of men, created by himſelf out of matter, and endowed with a malignant and irrational ſoul like his own.

own [g]. Hence was generated that aſtoniſhing difference which is found to exiſt between the in-

CENT. II.

The philoſophy of Saturninus.

[g] The principal ancient writers that have treated of the diſcipline of Saturninus are Irenæus *adv. Hæreſ.* lib. i. cap. xxiv. Tertullian *de Præſcript. contra Hæret.* cap. xlvi. Theodoret. *Fabular. Hæret.* lib. i. c. ii. Euſebius *Hiſtor. Eccleſ.* lib. iv. cap. vii. Epiphanius *Hæreſ.* xxiii. p. 62. & Auguſtin. *in lib. de Hæreſib.* c. iii. but by none of theſe has the ſubject been handled otherwiſe than in a confuſed, conciſe, and obſcure manner. The conſequence of this has been, that whenever modern writers have attempted to extract an account of the philoſophy and religion of this Syrian from any of the authors above-mentioned, they have been ſure to fall into errors, and conjure up for themſelves difficulties where none in reality exiſt. Thoſe errors and difficulties I have made it a part of my buſineſs to correct and overcome, as far as the obſcurity of ancient authors, and their irregular mode of narration would permit: and I will here lay before the reader a ſtatement of thoſe particulars in which I have found reaſon to differ from the commonly received opinion. (I.) That Saturninus aſſigned to the corrupt material principle, which he conſidered as having been co-eternal with the Deity, a peculiar prince or governor, is no where expreſsly ſtated by any ancient authors; from what they have left us on record, however, reſpecting his Satan, we may, I think, fairly collect as much. Saturninus taught, as muſt clearly be perceived by any one who ſhall attentively conſider what is ſaid of him by Irenæus, that Satan, upon diſcovering the human beings that had been formed by the creators of the world, and endowed with a rational ſoul by the Supreme Deity, went to work and created, out of matter, a man of a corrupt and oppoſite character. This Satan, Irenæus terms the "angel inimical to the creators of the world," but more particularly "to the God of the Hebrews." But, certainly, his very work beſpeaks him to have been ſomething greater and more powerful than an angel. The creators of the world were angels, but they poſſeſſed not the power of imparting to the human beings whom they had formed a rational ſoul. The men of their creation breathed and crawled about upon the face of the earth like worms, and had it not been for the commiſeration of the Supreme Being, they never would have poſſeſſed that ſpark of life, a rational ſoul. But the power of Satan was ſuch, that he could beſtow on the man whom he cre-

CENT. II.

inhabitants of the earth; of whom ſome are of a ſound and virtuouſly diſpoſed mind, others of a radically

The philoſophy of Saturninus.

ated an actual ſoul, a ſoul, perverſe it is true, and naturally inclined to what is evil, but indiſputably intellectual or rational. The ancient writers indeed do not expreſsly ſtate this, but it is an inference that admits of no controverſy. For wicked men, who are deſcended from that original man whom Satan created, are unqueſtionably endowed with a ſoul as much as good men, although it be a ſoul that naturally inclines them to evil. But this ſoul they certainly cannot have received from God, the fountain of nothing but what is good, and they therefore muſt have been indebted for it to Satan, their father. The Satan of Saturninus then, although an evil being, muſt have been equal in power to the Supreme Deity, and alike capable of animating bodies with a rational ſoul.

From theſe premiſes it follows, that we muſt believe Saturninus to have attributed to his Satan an independent exiſtence coëval with that of the Deity, and likewiſe the command or controul of matter from all eternity. It is, moreover, to be ſuppoſed, that the ſoul with which Satan inſpired the man that he had formed, was taken by him from the ſoul of matter. Wherefore, it ſhould ſeem moſt likely, that Saturninus agreed with ſome others of the Gnoſtics in believing matter to be animated. (II.) That the Deity was not diſpleaſed with the world that had been created by the ſeven angels, is another circumſtance as to which ancient authors are ſilent, but which may fairly be inferred from his having imparted to the men formed by theſe ſame angels a rational mind or ſoul. Having rendered the inhabitants of the world capable of living well and happily therein, it is impoſſible that the world itſelf ſhould have appeared diſpleaſing in his ſight. Although, therefore, the world had been created without the knowledge of the Deity, yet, when it was perfected, he beheld it with approbation, and deemed it worthy of having its exiſtence continued for a certain time. (III.) That Saturninus conſidered the Deity as having placed this world under the government of thoſe who had framed it, reſerving to himſelf, however, the ſupreme dominion and likewiſe the worſhip of mankind, is clear from what he taught reſpecting the defection of the founders of the world from God. If there had been no previous obligation or ſubjection, there could have been no deſertion of duty or rebellion. Thoſe of the learned are deceived, therefore,

a radically vicious character inclining to every thing that is evil. The former derived their body from the founders of the world, their ſoul from the Supreme Deity; the latter derive both body and ſoul from Satan, the governor of matter [*b*]. That all theſe things were deviſed by way

CENT. II.

The philoſophy of Saturninus.

fore, who repreſent Saturninus as having maintained that the founders of the world were originally evil beings; an error into which many have fallen with regard to the diſcipline of various others of the Gnoſtic ſects. — The ſpiritual beings noticed by Saturninus are of three deſcriptions; the Supreme Deity, the angels who created the world, and Satan, the prince or governor of matter. The Supreme Deity he conſidered as eſſentially good, the Chief Good; the prince of matter as eſſentially evil; the creators of the world, the rulers or governors of the ſeven moveable ſtars, as neither eſſentially good, like the Deity, nor evil like Satan, but holding, as it were, a middle kind of character; that is, being endowed with free will, they were at liberty to follow either good or evil. (IV.) That Satan, or the prince of matter, was enraged with the founders of the world, and privily counteracted the deſigns of them and the Supreme Deity, by creating a depraved and malignant race of men, we find noticed by ancient writers; but as to the cauſe of his indignation and hatred, they are wholly ſilent, leaving this, like almoſt every other part of the diſcipline of Saturninus, but very imperfectly deſcribed. It will be no very difficult matter, however, to ſupply the deficiency in this inſtance from conjecture. Thoſe ſeven angels, in their formation of the world, and repleniſhing it with inhabitants, had invaded the province of Satan, and drawn away matter from his dominion. Filled with indignation, as it was natural for him to be, at this, he, out of oppoſition, introduced upon earth a race of men of his own forming, by whom thoſe who had been created by the angels might be continually vexed and tormented.

[*b*] Irenæus ſtates expreſsly in lib. i. cap. xxiv. that Saturninus was the firſt of the Gnoſtics that divided mankind into two claſſes, the one naturally good, the other evil. The fact was, that he deſpaired of being able to account for all the evil in the world from matter alone, and therefore had recourſe to the expedient of ſuppoſing all whoſe propenſities appeared to be radically vicious to

CENT. II.

way of accounting for the exiſtence of natural as well as moral evil, muſt be obvious to every one.

The Saturnian ſyſtem of theology.

XLV. Upon his converſion to Chriſtianity, Saturninus made it his endeavour to produce, as far as poſſible, a congruity between the religion that he had thus eſpouſed and his former philoſophical opinions. The way he took was to pretend that the founders and governors of the world had, after a certain period, rebelled againſt the Supreme Deity [*i*]. That in conſequence

have been inſpired with a wicked ſoul, and that the prince of matter had created this race of men and breathed into them a ſoul ſimilar to his own, a ſoul naturally inclined to every thing evil and depraved, in order to prevent his being altogether excluded from any dominion over the world. But with regard to the tenets of Saturninus reſpecting the formation of the firſt men, Irenæus, like other ancient authors, ſpeaks very indiſtinctly. He ſays, in a general way, *duo genera hominum plaſmata ab angelis dicit.* Learned men have been hence led to conclude, that Saturninus conceived the founders of the world to have created bad as well as good men, and that, therefore, they muſt have been of an evil nature themſelves. But to an attentive reader it muſt be obvious that he did not conceive wicked men to have derived their origin from the ſame parents as had produced the good, but that they were the children of Satan.

[*i*] Reſpecting this ſedition of the founders of the world, which Saturninus repreſented as the cauſe of Chriſt's advent, Irenæus thus expreſſes himſelf; *Et propter hoc quod diſſolvere voluerint patrem ejus* (of Chriſt) *omnes principes* (of the world) *adveniſſe Chriſtum ad deſtructionem Judæorum Dei, &c.* At the firſt ſight, certainly, this may appear particularly obſcure; but it will not long embarraſs any one who is acquainted with the diſcipline of the Gnoſtics. The creators of the world, being elated with pride, conceived a wiſh to be themſelves conſidered as gods by the human race, and, in conſequence of this, became deſirous of extinguiſhing all knowledge and worſhip of the Moſt High amongſt men. By *Patrem Chriſti diſſolvere*, therefore, Irenæus means arrogating to themſelves that which was due to God

quence of this, Chriſt, the Son of God, had deſcended from above and taken upon him a body, not indeed a true or real body compoſed of depraved matter, but merely the ſhadow or reſemblance of one. That the cauſe or purpoſe for which Chriſt came into the world was, that he might overthrow, not only the dominion of the founders of the world, but alſo that of Satan, or the prince of matter, and his ſatellites: he was, moreover, to deſtroy thoſe miniſters of Satan, the men of his creation; and finally to liberate and bring back to God the good men, in whom exiſted a divine ſoul [*k*]. The moral diſcipline

CENT. II.

The Saturninian ſyſtem of theology.

God alone, and extinguiſhing in men's minds all knowledge of the Supreme Father: The orthodox Chriſtians and the Gnoſtics were in perfect agreement as to this, that the worſhip of a plurality of gods, which at the time of Chriſt's appearance, prevailed nearly throughout the world, had been introduced by a ſet of proud ſpiritual beings, unjuſtly covetous of divine honours; and that the gods, therefore, whom the nations worſhipped, had a real exiſtence, and were, in fact, evil dæmons. But there was this difference between the Gnoſtics and other Chriſtians, that the former reckoned the God of the Jews as one of thoſe apoſtate ſpirits who were deſirous of withdrawing men from the worſhip of the true and Supreme God; and conceived that the creators of the world, whom they diſtinguiſhed from the Supreme Deity, were the principal authors of this grievous iniquity; whereas the latter believed that certain evil angels, who had themſelves previouſly rebelled againſt the true God and only Creator of the world and every thing in it, and who, in conſequence of ſuch their rebellion, were ſuffering under a ſevere, but well-merited, puniſhment, had inſtigated men to withhold their worſhip from the true and Supreme God, and beſtow it on natures hateful in his ſight.

[*k*] This view of the Saturninian diſcipline, it muſt be acknowledged, is mutilated and defective in almoſt all its parts; but the fault muſt reſt with the ancient writers who have not left us the means of rendering it more perfect. A few things, however, may be added as obviouſly deducible from the

CENT. II.

The Saturninian ſyſtem of theology.

diſcipline preſcribed by Saturninus to his followers was rigid and auſtere. Regarding matter as inherently corrupt, and the body, therefore, as the ſeat of all vices, he enjoined an abſtinence from wine, fleſh, and every aliment that might tend to recruit or invigorate the corporeal frame; ſo that the body, being extenuated and brought low, the mind might, with the

the tenets above noticed. As Saturninus would not admit that Chriſt took upon him a real body, he muſt of neceſſity have denied his having been ſeized and ill-treated by the Jews, his having ſuffered on the croſs, and alſo his reſurrection from the dead. His belief muſt therefore have been, either that ſome other perſon underwent capital puniſhment in Chriſt's ſtead, or that it was merely ſome ſemblance or ſhadow of Chriſt that appeared on the croſs. The object of Chriſt's advent, according to Saturninus, was, that he might reſtore to mankind that knowledge of the Supreme Deity which they had unfortunately loſt. It is evident, therefore, that he had no idea of an expiation of ſins through Chriſt, but conceived, according to the leading principle of Gnoſticiſm, that γνῶσις, as it was termed, or a knowledge of the Supreme Father of the univerſe, and a thorough contempt for the falſe gods that were worſhipped by the world at large, were alone ſufficient to the obtaining of ſalvation. None of the human race, however, he contended, could attain to a knowledge of the Deity but thoſe on whom the Supreme Being had conferred a divine ſoul. The far greater part of mankind, therefore, having, according to him, been endowed by Satan with an iniquitous mind, were, of courſe, incapable of deriving any benefit from Chriſt. Thoſe who received Chriſt were the good; and the minds of theſe being illuminated with a knowledge of the true God, reverted, on the diſſolution of the body, to the celeſtial father, the body itſelf returning to matter, from whence it had been firſt taken. Thoſe who rejected Chriſt were the wicked; and theſe Saturninus conſidered as deſtined to periſh altogether; the body itſelf being reſolved into matter, and the evil ſoul which animated the body returning to the ſoul of matter from whence it was originally taken. None of the Gnoſtics, it may be remarked, ſeem to have been aware of any other end for which Chriſt came into the world, than that he might overthrow idolatry and revive amongſt the human race a knowledge of the true God.

greater

greater readineſs and alacrity, perceive and worſhip the Supreme Deity. He was alſo averſe to marriage, inaſmuch as its object was the propagation of bodies [*l*]. In what way, or by what authorities Saturninus ſupported his tenets and

CENT. II.

The Saturninian ſyſtem of theology.

[*l*] Irenæus does not ſay that all the followers of Saturninus abſtained from animal food, but merely that many of them did ſo, and that not a few weak perſons were vaſtly captivated by this ſort of ſelf-denial. It appears then, that Saturninus either left his diſciples at liberty to abſtain from animal food or not, according to their pleaſure, or that he did not preſcribe a courſe of diſcipline equally harſh and ſevere to all. Of the two, the latter ſtrikes me as the moſt probable. His followers, I ſhould conceive, were arranged much in the way that was afterwards adopted by Manes and others, *i. e.* divided into diſciples of the firſt and ſecond claſs. The latter, not aſpiring to any very ſuperior degree of ſanctity and virtue, although they never exceeded the bounds of ſobriety and moderation, yet made uſe of the ſame kinds of bodily aliment as other men; but the former, being anxious to diſpel thoſe clouds with which the mind was ſubject to be enveloped from its connection with the body, and to arrive at a clearer knowledge of the Deity, allowed themſelves no ſort of bodily ſuſtenance, except of the moſt ſlender kind. After this manner alſo, ought we, I think, to underſtand what is ſaid by ancient writers of the Saturninians having been prohibited from marrying. For although Irenæus ſtates theſe men to have looked upon marriage and generation as of Satanic origin, from whence it neceſſarily follows that they muſt have regarded all ſexual intercourſe as abſolutely unlawful, it is with difficulty I can bring myſelf to believe that Saturninus allowed none of his diſciples to marry. All leaders of ſects make it their principal object to collect together as many followers as poſſible. But ſects whoſe leading principle it is to ſubdue, and even ſtifle altogether, the inſtincts of nature, can never become numerous or extenſive, but after exiſting for a while in a low dwindled ſtate, are ſure to fall to decay. With a view to prevent this otherwiſe inevitable conſequence, the founders of thoſe ſects whoſe moral diſcipline was particularly rigid and auſtere, were accuſtomed, for the moſt part, to exact an implicit conformity to their rules, merely from ſuch as were meant to ſtand forth as an example to others; the reſt were left much at liberty to conſult their own natural inclinations. The Saturnian ſect

appears

CENT. II. and doctrine we are altogether uninformed. It appears however that the code of the Old Teſtament, which we know to have been held in reverence by the Gnoſtics, was rejected by him on the ground of its having been compiled in part by the creators of the world, and in part by the prince of matter, or Satan.

The philoſophy of Baſilides.

XLVI. Nearly about the ſame time that Syria, and more particularly its chief city, Antioch, was infeſted and diſturbed by the wild theories of Saturninus, an Alexandrian philoſopher of a ſimilar genius, named Baſilides, was endeavouring to introduce amongſt his countrymen and the inhabitants of the various provinces of Egypt another form of religion, differing widely from the principles entertained by the Chriſtians at large [*m*]. His ſyſtem took for its baſis certain points

appears never to have extended itſelf beyond the confines of Syria; it ſhould alſo ſeem to have been but of ſhort duration.

[*m*] Baſilides and his ſect are treated of by all thoſe ancient authors that have written on hereſies, and whom we have above referred to when ſpeaking of Saturninus. But ſince moſt of them merely copy, and not unfrequently incorrectly, from Irenæus, we ſhall direct our attention principally to him. It may not be amiſs, however, occaſionally to turn to thoſe authors who, in treating of other matters, have here and there incidentally adverted to Baſilides or his tenets, the principal of whom is Clement of Alexandria, who had read the books written by Baſilides and his ſon Iſidore, and in his *Stromata* cites many paſſages from them in the very words of the authors themſelves. For Baſilides himſelf wrote four and twenty books of commentaries on the goſpel; and his ſon left behind him exhortations, moral precepts, and a variety of other things. None of theſe works, it is to be regretted, are at this day extant. We have alſo to lament the loſs of a copious confutation of the abovementioned work of Baſilides by Agrippa Caſtor, a very celebrated and erudite Chriſtian writer of this century. From the paſſages cited out of the books of Baſilides by Clement, it is eaſily to be perceived that the man

points which, in common with Saturninus and the reſt of thoſe who were addicted to the oriental philoſophy, he aſſumed as indiſputable, namely, that there had eternally exiſted a Deity of the very higheſt excellence, of a nature, in fact, beyond all human conception; that matter had alſo an eternal exiſtence; that it was

CENT. II.

The philoſophy of Baſilides.

man was neither deſtitute of gravity, nor of an appearance of great piety towards God: For he writes in a very decorous and religious ſtyle. His manner of diction, however, is obſcure and out of the common track, ſo that there is occaſionally a difficulty in getting at his meaning. Nor is his adverſary Clement, in many inſtances, at all more intelligible. Indeed he, not unfrequently, is ſo unfortunate as to involve the maxims which he aſſails in ſtill greater obſcurity, and ſeems to enter the liſts againſt things which he does not ſufficiently underſtand. Turning to more modern writers, in addition to what is to be met with in the ordinary eccleſiaſtical hiſtorians, and the *Diſſertationes in Irenæum* of Ren. Maſſuetus, it will be found that great care and induſtry have been exerted in digeſting and illuſtrating the tenets of Baſilides by Iſaac Beauſobre in his *Hiſtory of the Manichees*, vol. ii. p. 8. et ſeq. Baſilides is ranked by this writer amongſt the precurſors of Manes; and not improperly ſo, in my opinion, if by the title of "precurſor" we are to underſtand one who builds his diſcipline on the ſame foundation, and conſequently has many tenets in common. Beauſobre, however, in other reſpects unqueſtionably a man of the firſt eminence, may well be complained of in this, that although he cannot deny Baſilides to have entertained errors of the moſt flagrant nature, he yet conſumes much time in exculpating him, and ſetting him off to advantage. The labour however is, in not a few inſtances, altogether thrown away. Baſilides flouriſhed nearly at the ſame period with Saturninus, that is under the reign of Hadrian, and died, according to the *Chronicle* of St. Jerome, at Alexandria, about the time that Barchocheba, the pretended Meſſiah of the Jews, was endeavouring to bring about a revolution in Paleſtine. The ancient Chriſtian writers who, without a ſhadow of reaſon, feign to themſelves a regular ſucceſſion of heretics ſimilar to that of the Grecian philoſophers, repreſent Baſilides alſo as having been a diſciple of Menander the Samaritan; but what we have remarked above reſpecting Menander muſt, we conceive, be ſufficient to prove this altogether unfounded.

animated,

CENT. II.

The philoſophy of Baſilides.

animated, and intrinſically corrupt; and from theſe premiſes it neceſſarily followed that the frame or machine of this world could not have been the work of the Deity, inaſmuch as he was totally eſtranged from every thing evil [n]. The nature of the Deity, however, together with the origin of this world, and of the human race, was explained by him after a more diffuſe and ſubtle manner than by Saturninus, in conſequence of his calling in the aſſiſtance of the Egyptian philoſophy. His doctrine was that the Deity had, long before the foundation of the world, begotten of himſelf ſeven natures of the moſt exalted kind, or, as the Gnoſtics termed them Æons, who, together with the Deity, from whom they proceeded, conſtitute a perfect and ſupremely bleſſed *Ogdoad* [o]. Of theſe Æons two

[n] From what is handed down to us by ancient writers reſpecting the tenets of Baſilides, there is nothing to be collected that can authoriſe us in concluding that, like the reſt of the Gnoſtics, he conſidered matter as being under the dominion of a ruler or prince peculiar to itſelf, or that he believed in the exiſtence of angels naturally inclined to evil. For every thing that has occurred reſpecting the world and the human race he apparently refers to three cauſes alone; namely, (I.) The Supreme Deity, of whom it is impoſſible to form any adequate conception; (II.) Depraved matter; and (III.) The creators of this world.

[o] Irenæus mentions ſix Æons only, as having been recognized by Baſilides; *viz.* the Deity himſelf, or the *Father*, *Nus*, *Logos*, *Phroneſis*, *Sophia*, and *Dynamis*. But Clement of Alexandria, *Stromat.* lib. iv. p. 637. adds two more, *Juſtitia* and *Pax*, and expreſsly ſtates that Baſilides held the divine family to be compoſed of eight individuals. In regard to this ſubject two queſtions ſuggeſt themſelves. Firſt whether theſe Æons are to be conſidered as perſons truly and really diſtinct from each other? or whether they ought not rather to be regarded as merely virtues or attributes of the Supreme Being, and that it was in thought or imagination alone that Baſilides ſeparated them from the Deity, and gave them the form of perſons? The latter opinion is eſpouſed by Ren. Maſſuetus, *Diſſert. in Irenæum*, I. p.

two of the feminine ſex, if any concluſion is to be drawn from their names, *viz.* *Sophia* and *Dynamis*, CENT. II.

The philoſophy of Baſilides.

I. p. 38. and Iſaac Beauſobre, *Hiſt. de Manichee*, tom. ii. p. 6, 7. as well as by ſome others. And without doubt it appears to be, in a certain degree, favoured by the names which Baſilides gives to his Æons, inaſmuch as they are thoſe by which certain of the virtues or attributes of intelligence and will are denoted. There is a circumſtance, however, which, I am free to own, draws me over entirely to the other of theſe opinions, and that is, that the Æon next in point of rank to the Father, namely, *Nus*, cannot poſſibly be regarded in any other light than as a diſtinct perſon. For this *Nus* is repreſented as the ſon of the Supreme Father, and as deſcending to this world for the purpoſe of liberating captive minds. Such then as he is, who holds the chief ſtation in this divine family, muſt unqueſtionably all thoſe who follow him be; nor can any reaſon whatever be aſſigned for our thinking otherwiſe of them, except it be what we have above noticed reſpecting their names: from whence, however, no concluſion on the ſubject can properly be drawn, ſince it is certain that many of the Gnoſtics whoſe Æons it is impoſſible for us to regard in any other light than as real perſons, diſtinct from each other, and from the Supreme Deity, gave to ſuch of their Æons names of a ſimilar nature and deſcription with thoſe above enumerated The ſecond queſtion is, whether the Æons of Baſilides, like thoſe of Valentine and others of the Gnoſtics, were of different ſexes, and whether they were conceived to have intermarried with each other? Referring to their names we find ſome of them maſculine, others feminine: but there are not ſo many maſculine as feminine names in his catalogue; neither does Irenæus or Clement, or any other ancient author repreſent Baſilides as teaching any thing reſpecting the marriages of his Æons; which certainly ſeems to indicate his having entertained notions leſs groſs, as to this point, than ſome others of the Gnoſtics. But from acceding to this opinion we find ourſelves recalled by Clement, who, after giving us the tenets of Baſilides reſpecting the origin of the world in his own words, ſubjoins this, moreover, as one of his principles; Ὅσα ἐκ συζυγίας προέρχεται, πληρώματα ἐστιν· ὅσα δὲ ἀπὸ ἑνός, εἰκόνες. *Quæcumque ex conjugatione procedunt, pleromata ſunt: quæcumque autem ab uno, imagines ſunt. Stromat.* lib. iv. p. 603. In this paſſage *pleroma* muſt be underſtood to have the ſame meaning with *Æon*. This is evident from the words of

CENT. II.

The philoſophy of Baſilides.

Dynamis, or wiſdom and power, generated of themſelves certain princes or angels of the firſt order. Theſe latter having founded for themſelves an habitation or heaven wherein to dwell, begat certain other angels of an order ſomewhat inferior to their own; who, in like manner, having conſtructed an heaven for themſelves, became the parents of a third order of angels. Theſe fabrications of heavens and generations of angels, were by degrees multiplied to ſuch an extent that they at length came to correſpond with the number of the days in the year, no leſs than three hundred and ſixty-five heavens, and as many different claſſes of angels, having been ſucceſſively called into exiſtence [*p*]. All theſe heavens were ſuppoſed to be under the

Baſilides himſelf, as quoted by Clement juſt before, where we find him expreſsly making uſe of the term ἀιών. For as by a figure of rhetoric, thoſe natures which inhabit eternity are denominated Æons, ſo alſo thoſe who dwell with the Deity in the Pleroma, or place of his peculiar reſidence are termed Pleromata. Baſilides, therefore muſt be underſtood as ſaying that an Æon could be generated in no other way than as the human race are; namely, ἐκ συζυγίας, from an intercourſe of the ſexes. But if this was his doctrine, it is clear that his diſcipline could not have materially differed from that of the reſt of the Gnoſtics; and that the account given of it by ancient writers is far from being perfect or complete.

[*p*] That ſuch was the doctrine of Baſilides, has, I believe, hitherto been univerſally credited on the faith of Irenæus, who, explicitly enough tells us that it was ſo, *adv. Hæreſ.* lib. i. cap. xxiv. Nor do I myſelf entertain the leaſt doubt of the thing, inaſmuch as I know that other notions very nearly reſembling theſe ridiculous fancies were cheriſhed by the Egyptians, amongſt whom Baſilides was born and educated. Beauſobre, however, in his *Hiſtoire de Manichee*, tom. ii. p. 9. will have it to be impoſſible that Baſilides could have been ſo utterly abſurd and irrational as ſeriouſly to maintain the exiſtence of three hundred and ſixty-five heavens, and an equal number of angelic orders. But in juſtification

CENT. II.

The philoſophy of Baſilides.

the dominion of a Supreme Lord to whom Baſilides gave the name of "Abraxas;" a title that ſhould ſeem to have comprehended under it little more of myſtery than this, that the Greek letters of which it is compoſed, if taken as numerals, will be found to expreſs the number of the Baſilidian heavens, *viz.* 365 [*q*]. The laſt,

juſtication of his incredulity he can alledge no other reaſons than theſe: — The opinion is in itſelf childiſh and abſurd: — it could therefore never have entered in the mind of Baſilides. Baſilides was an aſtronomer: — but it is incredible that any aſtronomer ſhould have believed in ſuch a multitude of heavens: — the thing, therefore, could not have been believed by Baſilides. Now that reaſons ſuch as theſe ſhould, for a moment, have had any weight with a man of quick capacity, is to me a matter of aſtoniſhment; for nothing ſurely can be more devoid of force; and if they be once admitted, the greateſt part of what ancient writers have handed down to us reſpecting the Gnoſtics muſt, of neceſſity, be rejected as unworthy of belief. Great indeed might have been the force of theſe arguments had Baſilides been a wiſe man and a ſkilful aſtronomer: but ſo far from this having been the caſe, it is admitted, even by thoſe who wiſh the beſt to him, that he was a man of weak judgment, and fettered, in no trifling degree, by the trammels of ſuperſtition. But to what purpoſe ſhould we multiply words? If his dogma reſpecting the number of the heavens ſtood unſupported by any circumſtance elſe, it would be placed beyond the reach of controverſy by the name "Abraxas" alone, which he gives to the Supreme Lord of thoſe heavens, and which contains within itſelf preciſely the number 365.

[*q*] That the name "Abraxas" or "Abraſax," for it is ſpelt in both ways, was conſidered by Baſilides as a ſacred word, and was applied by him to a certain nature of the moſt exalted order, admits not of the leaſt doubt. But what this nature was, as alſo what was the origin and meaning of this appellation, is a matter of much obſcurity, and one that has conſequently given riſe to a great variety of conjectures and diſputations amongſt the learned. Irenæus, from whom all the reſt appear to have borrowed what information they convey reſpecting this controverted word, touches on it but very briefly, lib. i. c. xxiv, § 7. *Eſſe autem*, ſays he, *principem illorum* (of the 365 heavens) Ἀβράξας,

CENT. II.

laſt, or three hundred and ſixty-fifth of theſe heavens, being ſituated immediately on the confines

The philoſophy of Baſilides.

et propter hoc ccclxv. *numeros habere in ſe.* From theſe words two things are to be collected. Firſt, that the Supreme Lord of the heavens had this title applied to him by Baſilides: and ſecondly, that his reaſon for ſo applying it was, that if the letters of which it is compoſed be taken as numerals, or in an arithmetical ſenſe, they exhibit the number 365, and therefore, in a certain degree, expreſs the function and dignity of the Supreme Lord of all the heavens. It is not, however, ſtated by Irenæus, and I would wiſh the reader particularly to attend to this, nor by any other ancient Greek or Latin author, that this name was invented or firſt thought on by Baſilides. The ſecond point which we gather from Irenæus, inaſmuch as it receives the ſtrongeſt confirmation from the very word itſelf, which, in reality, if the letters compoſing it, be taken as numerals, will be found to expreſs the number 365, appears to be admitted with ſcarcely any exception by the learned of the preſent day; and although there are not wanting eminent men who think that this word was looked upon as poſſeſſing ſome other power beſides its numeral force, and who have endeavoured by a reference to the ancient Egyptian and Greek languages, or in ſome other way to aſcertain what it was, they have never yet been able to bring forward any thing bearing the leaſt ſemblance of truth or reſpectability, in ſupport of their opinions. See Bern. de Montfaucon, *Palæograph. Græc.* lib. ii. cap. viii. Baſnage, *Hiſtoire des Juifs*, tom. iii. p. 700. Paul. Erneſt. Jablonſky, *de Nominis Abraxas Significatione*, which laſt the reader will find in the *Miſcellan. Nov. Lipſienſ.* tom. viii. § xi. p. 88. & ſeq. Let us then content ourſelves with that which is apparent, and not waſte our time in ſearching after things that, in all probability, we ſhall never diſcover. With regard to the point firſt above alluded to as deducible from the words of Irenæus, we find it giving riſe to great diverſity of opinion amongſt men of the moſt eminent abilities, by whom a very learned warfare has been carried on as to who that prince or Supreme Lord of the heavens was, to whom Baſilides gave the name of Abraxas. Thoſe ancient writers who lived neareſt to the time of Irenæus aſſert that by the term Abraxas was meant the Supreme Deity; and to this the greater part of more modern authors, without heſitation, aſſent. But the writers of ancient times, as well as thoſe of modern days, who give this

fines of eternal matter, the prince of thoſe angels whoſe dwelling this nether heaven was, conceived

CENT. II.

The philoſophy of Baſilides.

this interpretation to the words of Irenæus, manifeſtly run into the error of expounding the diſcipline of Baſilides upon orthodox principles. With Chriſtians of the true faith, the creator and ruler of the heavens is one and the ſame with the Supreme Deity; but the opinion of Baſilides was of a very different complexion. According to him, the three hundred and ſixty-five heavens were neither framed by the Supreme Deity, nor were they at all ſubject to his dominion or controul. His belief was, that the angels were the fabricators of the heavens, and that the government of theſe celeſtial abodes reſted with thoſe who had thus framed them. Beſides there is another thing which deprives this ancient opinion of all weight or authority. Baſilides maintained, that the Supreme Deity had no name, and would never countenance his being ſpoken of under any other title than that of "the Father." We have the expreſs teſtimony of Irenæus as to this, who ſtates that the Supreme Deity was ſtyled by Baſilides, *innatus et innominatus Pater*. He muſt therefore have been inconſiſtent with himſelf had he, after this, given to the Deity any ſpecific title. Another opinion was ſtarted in the laſt age by John Chifflet who, in his *Comment. ad Gemmas Baſilidianas*, p. 58. contends that, by the title Abraxas was ſignified the ſun, who completes his annual circuit in three hundred and ſixty-five days. This opinion has been adopted by ſeveral of our later writers of the firſt reputation, and amongſt others, by the very learned Iſaac Beauſobre who, in his *Hiſtory of the Manichees*, tom. ii. p. 51. has, with great ability and learning, brought forward various new arguments and reaſons in its ſupport. But in addition to not a few other things, in which theſe arguments are defective, it is particularly deſerving of remark that they aſſume it for a fact, but fail altogether in proving that Baſilides regarded the ſun as the prince or ſupreme lord of all the heavens. For my own part, after having conſidered every thing that has been handed down to us reſpecting the tenets of Baſilides, with the greateſt poſſible attention, I can find nothing whatever that ſhould afford the leaſt grounds for our even ſuſpecting that he might conceive the ſun to be the reſidence of that great angel whoſe empire he ſuppoſed to extend over all the heavens. Beauſobre, in all probability perceiving this, endeavours indeed to make the diſcipline of Baſilides wear a

CENT. II.

conceived the idea of digeſting the confuſed maſs that thus lay near him, and of forming it

The philoſophy of Baſilides.

very different aſpect from that which it exhibits as deſcribed by Irenæus and others, and contends that the idle conceit of a continued ſeries of 365 heavens belongs to Irenæus and not to Baſilides. But, as I have remarked above, he does this without any evidence or authority; and, after all, gains little or nothing by it in ſupport of his hypotheſis reſpecting the title Abraxas. For it may ſtill continue to be required that the fact of Baſilides having attributed to the ſun the government or dominion of the ſkies, and of his having in conſequence thereof conſidered this grand luminary, or ſome all-powerful genius reſiding therein, as deſerving of the moſt diſtinguiſhed, not to ſay divine, honours, ſhould be proved to us, not by Abraxean or Baſilidian gems, that is, not by ænigmatical ſculptures of which we have as yet received no explanation that can be depended on, but by paſſages from ancient authors. That eminent ſcholar Paul. Erneſt. Jablonſky, however, has thought fit, upon the whole, to eſpouſe this opinion, though not without exerciſing his genius upon it, and endeavouring to make it accommodate itſelf, in ſome meaſure, to the religion of the goſpel, leſt it ſhould ſeem too extravagant for a Chriſtian man to entertain. See his very learned diſſertation *de Significatione Nominis Abraxas*, printed in the *Miſcellanea Lipſienſ. Nov.* vol. vii. He conceives that Abraxas meant the ſun, and thinks that although this is not expreſsly ſtated by the ancient Chriſtian fathers, yet that they occaſionally give obſcure intimations of it. § ix. Baſilides, according to him, transferred this title to Chriſt, who in the ſacred writings is compared to the ſun, and, *Malach.* iv. 2. is termed the Sun of Righteouſneſs. Abraxas therefore, was the name of Chriſt himſelf, and Baſilides, in thus applying it, meant to inſtruct his followers that the long and anxiouſly expected Sun of Righteouſneſs had appeared, and that grateful and acceptable year of the Lord, ſpoken of by Iſaiah the prophet, lxi. 2. was begun. It would give me pleaſure could I perceive that theſe things were as clear and well-founded as they are ingenious and pious. But the fact is, that there are many things aſſumed by this illuſtrious writer as eſtabliſhed, which appear to me to be, by no means, placed beyond the reach of controverſy. He aſſumes, for inſtance, that Baſilides aſcribed a divine authority to the books of the Old

it into a world, and repleniſhing it with inhabitants. This deſign he, with the aſſiſtance of the

CENT. II.

The philoſophy of Baſilides.

Old Teſtament; which certainly was not the caſe, if any faith whatever is to be placed in ancient writers; — that the name Abraxas was firſt invented by Baſilides; but no ſuch thing is to be met with any where on record; — that thoſe gems on which the name of Abraxas is to be found, and which are commonly termed Baſilidian gems, were all of them of the manufacture of Baſilides; a thing that appears to me altogether incredible; — that from theſe gems ſomething certain and definitive may be collected; but which unqueſtionably admits of very conſiderable doubt. — In ſhort, not only theſe, but a variety of other things are aſſumed by him, to which no one the leaſt converſant in matters of antiquity can eaſily be brought to yield his aſſent; indeed, ingenuouſly to confeſs the truth, his whole hypotheſis appears to me to carry with it an air of darkneſs and ambiguity, and to be by no means eaſy of comprehenſion. For my own part, laying aſide all conceits and conjectures, however much they may be diſtinguiſhed by erudition or acumen, I think that as to this point Irenæus alone is deſerving of attention, and that it may be clearly enough collected from him who this Abraxas was that makes ſuch a conſpicuous figure in the Baſilidian diſcipline. According to Irenæus this title was given by Baſilides to the prince or ſupreme governor of all the heavens. Undoubtedly then this Abraxas could have been none other than the firſt and greateſt of the angels that were generated of Sophia and Dynamis; he who, together with his aſſociates, founded that firſt of the heavens which, in point of formation, took precedence of all the reſt. His rule or government naturally extended itſelf over all the heavens that were ſubſequently formed, for he was the father of the angels that framed them, and, of courſe, had much the ſame kind of reverence paid him by theſe his progeny as was manifeſted for the Deity, by the Æons reſident with him in the pleroma. He was therefore deſervedly ſtyled *Princeps Cœlorum*, the prince or ſupreme lord of the heavens: and the diſcipline of Baſilides recognizes no other prince of the heavens beſides him. The name Abraxas which compriſes the number 365, was peculiarly applicable to him, inaſmuch as it was he alone that originated the whole 365 heavens; of which none would have exiſted had he not framed the firſt and higheſt of them, and likewiſe be-

CENT. II.

The philoſophy of Baſilides.

the minor angels that were reſident with him, at length carried into effect: but whether with or

gotten that inferior order of angels by whom the ſecond heaven was made. A great abundance of ancient gems, bearing, in addition to divers other figures of Egyptian invention, the name or title of Abraxas, is at this day extant, and more of them continue to be every now and then diſcovered in various parts of Egypt. In addition to what is to be met with in other authors who have incidentally adverted to the ſubject, the reader will find a conſiderable number of ſpecimens of theſe gems exhibited by J. Macarius in a treatiſe of his expreſsly dedicated to their illuſtration, and which was enlarged and publiſhed by J. Chifflet, Antwerp, 1657. 4to, under the following title, *Abraxas, ſeu de Gemmis Baſilidianis Diſquiſitio*, as well as by Bern. de Montfaucon *Palæograph. Græc.* lib. ii. cap. viii. Relying upon what is ſtated by Irenæus and other ancient authors, that the title Abraxas was held ſacred by the Baſilidian ſect, the learned have been almoſt unanimous in conſidering all theſe gems as of the manufacture of Baſilides and his followers, and that they were diſtributed to his diſciples in the place of amulets to guard them againſt poiſons, witchcraft, and ſuch-like ills: and hence amongſt ſtudents of antiquity it has been uſual to diſtinguiſh them by the title of Baſilidian gems. Beauſobre, however, in his *Hiſtoire de Manichée*, vol. ii. p. 51. has with much ſtrength of genius entered the liſts againſt this prevailing opinion, contending, that from the words and figures engraven on theſe gems, it is clear that, inſtead of being aſcribed to perſons poſſeſſing the leaſt tincture of Chriſtianity, they ought rather to be conſidered as the productions of men utterly unacquainted with the true religion, and the ſlaves of a moſt baſe and degrading ſuperſtition. With not a few the force of his arguments has prevailed: but amongſt theſe we are not at liberty to reckon the eminently learned Jablonſky, who, in his diſſertation already noticed, labours hard to overthrow Beauſobre's reaſoning, and to uphold the common opinion reſpecting the Chriſtian, and more particularly the Baſilidian, origin of theſe gems. The fact is, that unleſs theſe gems be regarded as of Chriſtian origin, Jablonſky's interpretation of the word Abraxas muſt inevitably fall to the ground. According to my view of the ſubject it ſeems impoſſible to deny Beauſobre this much, that no inconſiderable portion of theſe gems are of a nature that will not admit of our believing them to have come from the

or without the knowledge of the Supreme Deity is uncertain. Of this, however, we are left in no

CENT. II.

The philoſophy of Baſilides.

the hands of any Chriſtian workman, although, unqueſtionably, ſome of them exhibit certain marks or ſigns that may be conſidered as having ſomewhat of a diſtant reference to the Chriſtian religion. For by far the greater portion of them carry on their face the inſignia of the Egyptian religion, and are evidently the offspring of a ſuperſtition too groſs to enſlave the mind even of an half Chriſtian. In my opinion therefore Baſilides did not firſt deviſe or invent the title of Abraxas, but borrowed it, as he did a variety of other things, from the diſcipline of the Egyptian prieſts: nor is there, as I have already above obſerved, any ancient writer whatever that attributes the invention of this title to Baſilides. Now let us, only for a moment ſuppoſe, that Abraxas was a title by which the Egyptians were accuſtomed, long before the riſe of Chriſtianity, to deſignate the ruler or chief of thoſe dæmons or angels whom they believed to preſide over the heavens and the ſtars, and we ſhall have no further to ſeek, either as to the nature or deſign of theſe gems, or the reaſon of their being inſcribed with this name. It was an ancient opinion of the Egyptians that the dæmons who rule over the heavens and the ſtars, poſſeſs alſo no little degree of influence over human affairs, and that amongſt them there are ſome who delight in the evils of the human race, and make it their ſtudy, either of themſelves, or through the inſtrumentality of agents, to afflict mankind with diſeaſes or other grievous ills. With a view then to defend themſelves againſt theſe enemies and torturers, and to ſecure both body and mind from the calamities which evil ſpirits of this kind might meditate againſt them, theſe deluded people were accuſtomed to inſcribe on gems the name of that dæmon whom they ſuppoſed to have the ſupreme command over all the heavens and their rulers, together with ſome additional letters or figures which they ſuppoſed to poſſeſs great virtues, and to hang theſe gems as amulets about their necks. Their notion was, (indeed the ſuperſtition is not even yet obliterated amongſt the vulgar of the eaſt,) that the evil dæmons, upon beholding the terrific name of their ſupreme lord and ruler, accompanied with the abovementioned myſterious words and figures, would find themſelves incapable of working any harm to the perſon wearing this defence, and would conſequently take to flight. Baſilides, who was an Egyptian, tranſplanted this

CENT. II.

The philoſophy of Baſilides.

no doubt, that Baſilides did not conceive the form of this world and of mankind to have been firſt deviſed by theſe angels themſelves, but that they worked after a model with which they had been ſupplied by Sophia, or Wiſdom, one of the Æons [r]. The firſt of the human race, in

opinion, and the practice conſequent upon it, into his ſyſtem, with this difference only, that rejecting ſuch figures or words as were profane, and would have been a ſcandal and diſgrace to the religion that he had adopted, he, in their room, annexed to the title of Abraxas certain others more ſuitable to the Chriſtian character.

[r] Baſilides did not, like the other Gnoſtics, conſider the architect of this world to be evil in his nature; but appears rather to have thought very highly of him, terming him, according to Clement, "the prophet and image of the True God;" to whom Sophia, or Wiſdom, that is one of the Æons, communicated the model of the world and of the human race. *Stromat.* lib. iv. p. 603. Nearly all the Gnoſtics, indeed, were agreed in this, that the founder or founders of this world did not themſelves deviſe the faſhion thereof, or of mankind, but in the formation of both had before their eyes that model of the world and of the human race which exiſts with God in the pleroma. In truth, it was impoſſible for Baſilides, conſiſtently with his tenets, to think otherwiſe than well of the Creator of the world, inaſmuch as he deduced the origin of ſuch creator through two Æons from the Deity himſelf, and conſequently muſt have admitted of his bearing ſomewhat of an affinity or relationſhip to the divine nature. This creator of the world was not however conſidered by him as good after the ſame manner that God is good; namely, as being altogether incapable of meditating, or even conceiving any thing evil: but rather as poſſeſſing a middle kind of nature, and endowed with a freedom of will that might be turned either to a good or a bad account. From the Supreme Being nothing evil could proceed, from matter nothing good. But the angels who formed the world out of matter, or who were ſuppoſed to adminiſter and govern it, had an equal power of inclining themſelves either way, to good or to evil. This was the opinion of all the Gnoſtics who believed that the creator of the world, or as they termed him Demiurgus, was not originally of an evil

CENT. II.

The philoſophy of Baſilides.

in addition to a body compoſed of matter, were poſſeſſed of a ſenſitive and concupiſcent ſoul derived from the ſoul of the world. To this, through the benevolence of the Deity, was ſubſequently added an intelligent and rational ſoul, whoſe powers, however, were much impeded and diminiſhed by that brutal ſoul which had been derived from matter[s]. The angels who framed

evil nature: a circumſtance that at once accounts for our finding Demiurgus extolled and ſpoken of in the moſt exalted terms by perſons who in the next breath repreſent him as the author and cauſe of much miſchief and calamity. The fact was, that they regarded him as a being of an excellent nature, but at the ſame time as one that had made an ill uſe of his liberty.

[s] Almoſt all the Gnoſtic ſects conſidered man as poſſeſſed of two ſouls; the one brutal, and endowed merely with a perceptive libidinous faculty; the other rational, and gifted with wiſdom and intelligence: the latter divine in its origin, the former earthly and derived from the ſoul of matter. Nor were different ſentiments on the ſubject entertained by Baſilides, of whom Clement expreſsly ſays, Δύο γὰρ δὴ ψυχὰς ὑποτίτεται καὶ ἔτος ἐν ἡμῖν. *Is ergo duas quoque in nobis ponit animas. Stromat.* lib. ii. p. 448. His ſon Iſidore alſo wrote a particular treatiſe περὶ προσφυοῦς ψυχῆς, *de Anima adnata*, that is, concerning that ſoul which coaleſces, or, as it were, unites itſelf in one with the rational ſoul, the concupiſcent ſoul that is continually leading aſtray the intelligent ſoul with which it is aſſociated in the body. From this work of Iſidore's Clement quotes ſeveral paſſages. To the queſtion however, of how it came to paſs that a portion of the divine nature, a ſoul of reaſon and intelligence, ſhould be condemned to a reſidence in this loathſome vitiated body? the Gnoſtics do not return an uniform anſwer. Of what might be the opinion of Baſilides as to this, the learned profeſs themſelves to be altogether ignorant. But to me it appears that all uncertainty on the ſubject is removed by Clement, who had read the books of Baſilides, and who, after giving a long quotation from him, adds as follows; Ἀλλὰ τῷ Βασιλείδῃ ἡ ὑποθεσις προαμαρτήσασαν ἐκεῖ τὴν ψυχὴν ἐν ἑτέρῳ βίῳ τὴν κόλασιν ὑπομένει ἐνταῦθα. *Sed Baſilidis hypotheſis dicit, animam, quæ prius peccaverat in alia vita, hic pati ſupplicium. Stromat.* lib. iv. p. 600. At the firſt I entertained

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CENT. II.

The philoſophy of Baſilides.

framed this world apportioned the government of it and its inhabitants amongſt themſelves in ſuch a way as that each nation or people might have its peculiar preſident or ruler. The chief of theſe angels was repreſented as having made choice of the Jewiſh nation for himſelf, and given to it a law by the mouth of his ſervant Moſes.

A rule of life and action was alſo preſcribed to the various other nations of the earth by the angels to whoſe guardianſhip and government

ſome doubt as to whether theſe words referred to the ſouls of all mankind, or to thoſe of martyrs alone. For the paſſage preceding them relates to martyrs only. But the words of Clement that immediately follow entirely remove this doubt, and render it evident that we ought to underſtand the paſſage as referring to the ſouls of the whole human race. The ſouls of men he divides into two claſſes; (I.) "The elect," or thoſe of martyrs; (II.) "The common," or thoſe of the ordinary deſcription. The former he repreſents as receiving an honorary puniſhment in martyrdom, the latter as undergoing the puniſhment due to their offences. It is evident therefore, I think, after what manner Baſilides accounted for the aſſociation of divine ſouls with groſs material bodies. The greater part of theſe ſouls had been guilty of ſome grievous tranſgreſſion in the regions above, and had conſequently rendered themſelves obnoxious to puniſhment. When the founder of this world, therefore, had created the human race endowed with nothing more than merely a ſenſitive ſoul, the Deity cauſed thoſe other ſouls to take up their abode, for a ſeaſon, in men's bodies by way of expiating their offence, and rendering themſelves worthy of being reſtored to their former eſtate. And in this the Deity acted conformably to his goodneſs. For ſince theſe ſouls had, by their tranſgreſſion, incurred an excluſion from the celeſtial regions, and rendered it impoſſible that they ſhould ever be again received there without having made expiation, a way was pointed out to them, in the maintenance of a continual conflict with matter and the temptations of the ſenſitive ſoul, by which they might wipe away the remembrance of their offence, and once more cleanſe themſelves from every impurity and ſtain.

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they had been reſpectively aſſigned. Finally, with a view to the preſervation of the rational ſouls, or thoſe that were of a kindred to the Divine Nature, the Supreme Deity had, according to Baſilides, at various times ſent to the different nations of the world legates and prophets from himſelf, who, by their exhortations and inſtruction, might prevent thoſe ſouls from ſinking altogether into a ſtate of brutal inſenſibility [*t*]. The ſouls that were attentive and paid obedience to the calls of theſe divine miſſionaries, were, upon the diſſolution of the material body, received up into the regions of felicity; but thoſe which rejected the proffered benevolence were conſtrained to migrate into other bodies, either of men or brute animals, and there to take up their reſidence until they ſhould become qualified for reaſcending to their priſtine bliſsful abodes [*u*].

The Baſilidian ſyſtem of theology.

XLVII. When Baſilides, overpowered by the divine luſtre of Chriſtianity, had been induced to enrol himſelf amongſt the number of its votaries, he made it his ſtudy to bend and interpret its principles in ſuch a way as that they

[*t*] The Baſilidians pretended to be in the poſſeſſion of the oracular communications of certain of theſe legates and prophets that had been ſent by the Deity to the human race before Chriſt's advent. The prophecies of Cham, for inſtance, which are mentioned by Clement, *Stromat.* lib. vi. p. 642. the diſcourſes of Barcabba and Barcophus, noticed by Euſebius, *Hiſtor. Eccleſ.* lib. iv. c. vii. p. 120. and other writings of a like deſcription. All of theſe were forgeries, no doubt, but yet I think they muſt have been of ſome antiquity.

[*u*] Origen is my authority for ſtating Baſilides to have believed in the migration of diſobedient ſouls on the diſſolution of the corporeal frame, into new bodies, either of men or brute animals. See his *Comm. in Matth.* tom. xxviii. p. 136. as alſo *in Rom.* v. p. 530. edit. Huetian. The principle alſo ſtrictly accords with his other tenets reſpecting the human ſoul.

might

CENT. II.

The Baſilidian ſyſtem of theology.

might appear rather to ſupport than to militate againſt theſe his philoſophic tenets. The cauſe of Chriſt's advent he maintained to be the defection of the founders and governors of this world from the Supreme Deity, the contentions and wars amongſt themſelves in which they were continually engaged, and the conſequent utter depravity and miſerable ſituation of the whole human race. Thoſe eminently powerful genii, he aſſerted, who both created and govern the world, being endowed with the moſt perfect freedom of will as to the choice of either good or evil, inclined by degrees to the latter, and endeavoured to root out and obliterate all knowledge of the true God, with a view to get themſelves regarded and worſhipped by mankind as gods in his ſtead. They then engaged in wars amongſt themſelves, each one ſtriving to extend the ſphere of his own power [*v*]. The preſident

[*v*] To us of the preſent day all this may appear very ſilly and ridiculous; but it was not viewed in this light by the oriental nations and the Egyptians, from whom Baſilides borrowed a conſiderable part of his ſyſtem. An opinion had, from very remote antiquity, prevailed amongſt the nations of the eaſt, and was adopted by the Jews, that this world was governed by angels, and that each nation or people had its preſiding or ruling angel. Whatever, therefore, might happen to any particular region, either of a fortunate or a diſaſtrous nature, was attributed not ſo much to the earthly ſovereign or prince of that region as to its angelic guardian and governor: the former, in every thing which he might do, whether good or evil, being conſidered as acting under the immediate incitement or inſtigation of the latter. Hence when kings and nations went to war with each other, the angels preſiding over thoſe nations were conceived to be the authors of ſuch wars. For theſe celeſtial rulers were ſuppoſed to burn with a deſire of extending the limits of their dominion and acquiring an increaſe of power, and, with that view,

dent or ruler of the Jewiſh nation, in particular, the chief angel of the whole, aimed at nothing ſhort of univerſal ſovereignty, his efforts being directed to the entire ſubjugation of his aſſociates and the various regions of the earth over which they reſpectively preſided. The conſequences produced by this perturbed ſtate of things were, that the true religion ſunk into oblivion, men reſigned themſelves wholly to the dominion of depraved appetites and luſts, and every part of the earth groaned under an accumulation of calamities, crimes, and wretchedneſs. Touched with compaſſion on beholding ſouls of a divine origin involved in ſo much miſery and diſtreſs, the Supreme Deity directed his Son, that is Nus, the firſt of the ſeven Æons begotten of himſelf, to deſcend on earth for the purpoſe of putting an end to the dominion of theſe preſiding angels, particularly that of their ſuperlatively proud and arrogant chief, whom the Jewiſh nation had learnt to venerate as a God. Having accompliſhed this, he was to revive amongſt men the long loſt knowledge of his father, and teach them to ſubdue the force of thoſe turbulent and irregular appetites, which war againſt the ſoul. Taking upon himſelf, therefore, the form and ſemblance of a man, but without aſſuming a real body, the ſon made his appearance amongſt the Jews, and entered on the duties of the function

CENT. II.

The Baſilidian ſyſtem of theology.

view, to infuſe into the minds of kings and nations a diſpoſition to make war on other ſtates. It is eaſy then to perceive in what ſenſe we ought to underſtand what is taught by ſo many of the Gnoſtics reſpecting the angels occaſioning diſturbances in mundane affairs, ſtirring up wars amongſt mankind, and bringing down a variety of afflictions and calamities on the human race.

that

CENT. II.

The Baſilidian ſyſtem of theology.

that had thus been aſſigned him by his father, confirming the truth of his doctrine by miracles of the moſt ſtupendous nature. Enraged at this invaſion of his dominion, the god of the Jews cauſed Chriſt to be apprehended and condemned to ſuffer death: but the latter, not being cloathed with a real body of his own, adopted that of Simon the Cyrenian, who had been compelled to bear his croſs, and tranſferred his form to Simon; ſo that inſtead of Chriſt it was Simon the Cyrenian whom the Jews crucified [*w*]. The ſouls that paid obedience

[*w*] In exhibiting a view of the tenets of Baſilides reſpecting Chriſt, I have followed the example of every other writer of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory that I have ſeen, and taken for my guide Irenæus. I muſt, however, confeſs that it is exceedingly difficult, I had almoſt ſaid impoſſible, to reconcile Irenæus's account with what Clement of Alexandria ſays reſpecting the Baſilidian inſtitutes, and the quotations which he gives us from the writings of Baſilides himſelf. This was firſt noticed, I believe, by Ren. Maſſuetus, *Diſſert. in Irenæum*, p. 61. But this author prefers the authority of Irenæus to that of Clement, and endeavours to give ſuch an interpretation to the words of the former as would do away the above-noticed want of harmony between the two. In this, however, he is unqueſtionably wrong, ſince it is evident that in every thing reſpecting Baſilides, Clement, who had actually peruſed the writings of the man himſelf, and who, being an Egyptian, had had the opportunity of witneſſing on the ſpot the rites and obſervances of the Baſilidian ſect, which had its origin in Egypt, muſt be much more deſerving of attention than Irenæus, who reſided in Gaul, and muſt neceſſarily have obtained what information he might poſſeſs on the ſubject merely at ſecond hand. Beauſobre, with more propriety, in his *Hiſt. de Manichée*, vol. ii. p. 24. & ſeq. deemed it beſt to turn his back entirely on Irenæus, and in eliciting the ſentiments of Baſilides reſpecting Chriſt, to depend wholly on what is to be met with on the ſubject in Clement. Clement, it may firſt be obſerved, adduces (*Stromat.* lib. iv. p. 600.) a paſſage from the writings of Baſilides, in which he denies that Chriſt was without

dience to the precepts and injunctions thus communicated to them from above, might expect, upon

CENT. II.

The Baſilidian ſyſtem of theology.

out ſpot or ſtain, and intimates, in no very obſcure terms, that by his ſufferings and death he merely made atonement to divine juſtice for his own proper ſins. Baſilides was one who detracted much from the ſanctity and pre-eminence of the martyrs, who were extolled and venerated beyond meaſure by the Chriſtians of his time, contending that the ſufferings and evils which they endured, were inflicted on them by the juſt judgment of God on account of ſins which they had committed either in the courſe of their lives here below, or elſe, before their coming into this world, in the regions above. To this error the orthodox Chriſtians oppoſed the example of our Saviour, who, although he was in the higheſt degree holy and immaculate, was yet expoſed to inexpreſſible ſufferings, and underwent even death itſelf. By way then of getting rid of the force of this argument, Baſilides had the temerity to aſſert that Chriſt, inaſmuch as he was a man, could not have been immaculate or a ſtranger to every thing ſinful. Εἰ μὲν τοι σφοδρότερον ἐκβιάσοιο τὸν λόγον, ἐρῶ, ἄνθρωπον, ὄντιν ἂν ὀνομάσῃς, ἄνθρωπον εἶναι δίκαιον τε τὸν θεόν. Καθαρὸς γὰρ ἐδεὶς, ὥσπερ εἶπέ τις, ἀπὸ ῥύπου. *Quod ſi vero me vehementius urgeas, dicam, quemcunque hominem nominaveris, eſſe hominem, juſtum autem Deum. Nullus enim eſt mundus, ut ille dicit, a ſorde.* Baſilides, we may obſerve, expreſſes himſelf with ſome caution, and with a view to avoid exciting ill-will, forbears making any direct mention of Chriſt by name. But Clement, who was in poſſeſſion of his writings, ſays that he is treating ἀντικρὺς περὶ τοῦ κυρίου — "openly of our Lord," and after ſome further remarks, adds, that ſuch a man was deſerving of the title of "atheiſt," inaſmuch as he deified the devil, (θειάζων μὲν τὸν διάβολον) and had the audacity to term our Lord a man obnoxious to ſin, (ἄνθρωπον ἁμαρτητικὸν). In making this accuſation, however, Clement ſuffered himſelf to be carried into extremes, and has, in conſequence, given to the tenets of Baſilides a much darker colouring than belongs to them. Baſilides never thought of deifying the devil, or any thing like it. He maintained indeed, that the founder or creator of this world was of divine origin; but this being was not, according to his tenets, the ſame with the devil, as Clement raſhly perſuaded himſelf, but a nature of the moſt exalted kind, although one that had ſomewhat deviated from the right path. But if Baſilides held that Chriſt himſelf, inaſmuch

CENT. II.

upon the diſſolution of the body, to regain their original ſeats in the bliſsful manſions above; but

The Baſilidian ſyſtem of theology.

inaſmuch as he was a man, could not be immaculate, how can that be true which Irenæus reports of his having maintained that Chriſt aſſumed merely the ſemblance or ſhadow of a body, and that Simon the Cyrenian was crucified by the Roman ſoldiers in his ſtead? To offend God by ſinning, and to undergo the penalty of ſin, a being muſt neceſſarily be cloathed with a real body. The argument deduced from this paſſage of Baſilides is ſeconded by what Clement ſays (*Stromat.* lib. i. p. 408.) of the Baſilidians having been accuſtomed annually to commemorate the baptiſm of Chriſt with great devotion on the fifteenth day of the month termed by the Egyptians Tubi, which anſwers to the ninth or tenth of our January. No being could have undergone luſtration or ablution by water but one inveſted with a real body. If Baſilides therefore believed Chriſt to have been actually baptized by John in the waters of Jordan, it follows, of neceſſity, that his opinion muſt have been miſrepreſented by thoſe who tell us that he maintained Chriſt to have taken on himſelf merely the ſemblance of a body. On theſe grounds it ſhould ſeem that the commonly received opinion as to the tenets of Baſilides, in regard to the point under conſideration, muſt be given up. Baſilides, like others of the Gnoſtics, made a diſtinction between Jeſus and Chriſt. Jeſus he accounted to have been a mortal born according to the ordinary courſe of nature, a man of great ſanctity, but yet not free altogether from ſin. Chriſt he regarded as one of the Æons, that is, the chief of thoſe immutable natures that had been begotten of God himſelf. Piety having led the upright man Jeſus to ſubmit himſelf to the baptiſm of John, Chriſt, by the divine command, deſcended into him from the regions above. When this ſame Jeſus was ſeized on by the Jews and condemned to undergo capital puniſhment, Chriſt departed out of him, and returned again into heaven, leaving Jeſus at the mercy of his enemies who put him to death by crucifixion. In all probability Irenæus might transfer to Baſilides a dogma peculiar to ſome other Gnoſtic ſect, or attribute to the whole Baſilidian ſect and its founder an erroneous ſuppoſition entertained by merely a few of its members; or finally, be miſled by authorities that were not to be depended on. Although I am perſuaded that the caſe muſt be nearly as I have here ſtated it, I yet cannot help acknowledging

but thoſe who neglected availing themſelves of the proffered inſtruction, were deſtined to migrate

CENT. II.

The Baſilidian ſyſtem of theology.

that I was a long time held in doubt as to whether the two paſſages above cited from Clement were of ſufficient weight to overthrow the authority of Irenæus, ſupported as it is by the conſent of all ancient writers. For, to any one who ſhall attentively conſider the words of Baſilides as quoted by Clement, it may very naturally occur that poſſibly Clement might be miſtaken in his application of this paſſage to our Bleſſed Lord, inaſmuch as Chriſt's name is not mentioned therein. That a day, indeed ſhould have been annually kept ſacred by the Baſilidians in commemoration of the baptiſm of Chriſt, has nothing in it abſolutely irreconcileable with the account given by Irenæus. For ſince ſome of the Gnoſtics maintained that Chriſt, in appearance, was nailed to the croſs, died, and roſe again from the dead, it is very poſſible Baſilides might have believed that the ſpectators were impoſed on by a ſimilar illuſion in regard to his baptiſm. But my doubts were all removed, and I at once gave Irenæus entirely up, upon my meeting with a third paſſage in Clement, ſuperior to the two above noticed, and of a nature that renders it utterly incapable of being reconciled with the tenets of Baſilides, as ſtated by Irenæus. For in his *Stromata*, lib. i. p. 408. Clement has expreſsly left it on record that the Baſilidians had diſputes amongſt themſelves as to the particular day on which Chriſt died. All indeed were agreed that his death took place in the ſixteenth year of the reign of the emperor Tiberius; but as to the particular day, ſome contended that it was on the 25th of the Egyptian month Phamenoth, others that it was on the 19th of the month Pharmuth, and others again that it was on the 25th of this latter month. Clement adds that there were ſome amongſt the Baſilidians who believed Chriſt to have been born on the 24th or 25th of the month Pharmuth. But how, let me aſk, could there have been any diſputes as to the particular day of our Bleſſed Saviour's birth or death amongſt people who denied that Chriſt had ever been born or died at all? How could ſuch people have maintained that Simon the Cyrenian underwent the puniſhment ordained by the Jews for our Lord? If what Irenæus ſtates reſpecting the tenets of the Baſilidians be correct, their diſputes would have been as to the particular day of Simon's death; reſpecting the day of the death of Chriſt no diſpute could

CENT. II.

The Baſilidian ſyſtem of theology.

grate into other bodies, either of men or brute animals, until their impurities ſhould be wholly purged

poſſibly have taken place amongſt men who believed him never to have died at all. But in what way ſoever this ought to be underſtood, the doctrine which Irenæus ſtates to have been taught in the Baſilidian ſchool is clear beyond a queſtion; namely, "that it behoves men not to confeſs "him who was actually crucified, but him who came in the "form of man, and was ſuppoſed to have been crucified. "— — — If any one confeſs him that was actually crucified, "he is yet a ſervant, and in bondage to thoſe (angels) "by whom the bodies of men were created; but whoſoever "ſhall deny him is freed from their dominion:" — Baſilides made a diſtinction between the man Jeſus and the Æon, the Son of the Supreme God, the Chriſt that deſcended into Jeſus at the time of his baptiſm by John. When the Jews laid hold on Jeſus, Chriſt withdrew himſelf from him, and left the man alone to encounter their fury. It was the man Jeſus alone, therefore, diveſted entirely of the divinity, whom the Romans cauſed to expire on the croſs. Wherefore, according to Baſilides, it was wrong to place one's truſt in him who was actually crucified, who was merely for a time the earthly tabernacle or abode of the Son of God, and who, when ſuſpended on the croſs, had nothing whatever of the divine nature remaining in him; but right reaſon required that ſalvation and happineſs ſhould be ſought for in none other than that Chriſt by whoſe power alone the man Jeſus had accompliſhed the various miracles that he wrought. A full and complete knowledge of the tenets of Baſilides reſpecting the Saviour of the human race is what we have not the means of obtaining; but what his opinion was of the cauſe for which Chriſt came into the world is ſufficiently apparent. Chriſt, he maintained, did not come for the purpoſe of expiating by his ſufferings and death the tranſgreſſions of the human race, and making ſatisfaction to the divine juſtice in man's ſtead: for he immediately took his departure out of Jeſus when the latter was about to undergo the puniſhment of death: and as to what Jeſus underwent, he, as we have already ſeen, was deemed to have made atonemement thereby merely for his own proper offences, not the ſins of others; for being a polluted mortal himſelf, it was impoſſible that he could become a propitiatory ſacrifice for other tranſgreſſors.

The

CENT. II.

The Baſilidian ſyſtem of theology.

purged away. As for the body, a maſs of corrupt and vitiated matter, no hope was to be entertained of its being ever reſtored to life again. Of the books of the Old Teſtament, which he conceived to have been compoſed, in part, by command of the prince of the Jewiſh nation, and in part at the inſtance of the other angels, Baſilides could not, of courſe, have made any great account. What the books of the New Teſtament might be, of which he approved, is not at preſent known.

He wrote a long explanatory comment indeed on the goſpel, but whether the goſpel, which he thus took upon him to expound, was one of thoſe which we recognize as genuine, or a different one, is not altogether certain [*x*].

XLVIII. The

The only reaſon, therefore, according to Baſilides, for which Chriſt came into the world, and for a time joined himſelf to the man Jeſus was, that he might overthrow the dominion of the founders of this world, and particularly that of the God of the Jews, and by reſtoring to mankind the long-loſt knowledge of the Supreme Deity, prevail on them to forſake the worſhip of thoſe beings who falſely ſtyled themſelves gods; that he might moreover excite in men's minds ſuch a determined oppoſition to thoſe luſts which are generated of the body and the ſenſitive ſoul, as would eventually free them from all impurity, and thus qualify them, upon the diſſolution of the corporeal frame, for re-aſcending to the bliſsful regions above, from whence they originally ſprang.

[*x*] Origen expreſsly ſays, that Baſilides had a proper goſpel of his own. *Com. in Luc.* p. 210. edit. Huetian. But as this is not imputed to him by Clement or any other ancient writer, I conſider it as falſe. That the goſpel, however, which he made uſe of, was in ſome reſpects different from ours, is what I can eaſily bring myſelf to believe. St. Jerome (*Proem. Comm. ad Titum,*) ſtates, that of St. Paul's Epiſtles thoſe addreſſed to Timothy and Titus were rejected by Baſilides; nor is there any difficulty in crediting this.

CENT. II.

The moral doctrine of Baſilides.

XLVIII. The moral diſcipline preſcribed by Baſilides, although founded, in ſome degree, in ſuperſtition, and ſupported rather by vain and empty ſubtleties than any true or ſolid principles, yet held out no encouragement to the irregular appetites and vices of mankind. The ſoul, he maintained, was poſſeſſed of a ſufficient power or energy to overcome every incitement to evil, internal as well as external; and conſequently that no man could become wicked except through his own fault. God, he aſſerted, would forgive no other offences but thoſe which had been unknowingly and unwillingly committed, and conſidered even a propenſion or leaning towards any ſin, in one and the ſame light with the actual commiſſion of ſuch ſin. All this is ſo obviouſly repugnant to a licentious courſe of life and action, that it is impoſſible

The firſt of the Epiſtles to the Corinthians I collect to have been approved of by him from the paſſage cited by Clement. *Stromat.* lib. iii. p. 509. But what I think more particularly deſerving of remark as to this point is, that Baſilides did not pretend that his tenets could be ſubſtantiated ſolely from thoſe ſacred writings which are in the hands of the Chriſtians at large, but intimated that he had been beholden for them in part to other ſources. A part, he ſaid, he had learnt from the mouth of Glaucias, whom he deſcribed as having been the interpreter (ἑρμηνεὺς) of St. Peter, meaning, as I ſuppoſe, one who was maſter of the ſentiments or opinions communicated privately by St. Peter to certain ſelect diſciples, whilſt another part had been derived immediately from St. Matthias. Vid. Clemens Alexandr. *Stromat.* lib. vii. p. 898 900. His doctrine, therefore, like that of moſt others of the Gnoſtics, was, that the diſcipline propounded by Chriſt was of a two-fold nature; the one ſimple, popular, public, and to be collected from the writings of the New Teſtament; the other ſublime and ſecret, received from our Saviour's lips by his apoſtles, and tranſmitted by them, not in writing, but merely by word of mouth, to certain diſciples of known and approved fidelity.

for

for us to place any faith in the accounts of thoſe ancient authors who repreſent Baſilides as having countenanced the utmoſt laxity of manners amongſt his followers [*y*]. The unfavourable ſuſpicions that were entertained by many reſpecting the nature of his moral diſcipline, appear to have been excited in part by the infamous lives led by ſome of his diſciples [*z*], and

CENT. II.

The moral doctrine of Baſilides.

[*y*] Irenæus, St. Jerome, Epiphanius, and other ancient writers, repreſent Baſilides as having granted to his followers the moſt perfect liberty of doing whatever they might liſt. They, in fact, ſtate him to have recogniſed no diſtinction whatever between good and bad actions. But to this accuſation we are prevented from giving credit by the paſſages cited from the writings of Baſilides himſelf, as well as from thoſe of his ſon Iſidore, by Clement of Alexandria, in which the points of moral doctrine above adverted to, as well as others of a ſimilar nature, are propounded in direct and expreſs terms. Points like theſe could never have been maintained by one who gave the rein to every natural appetite, and indulged his followers in the practice of all kinds of iniquity. See Clemens Alexandr. *Stromat.* lib. iv. p. 600. where we have the words of Baſilides himſelf expreſsly declaring that "he who would commit adultery is an adulterer, although opportunity may have failed him; he who would not ſcruple to commit murder a murderer, although his hands may never have been imbrued in human blood;" which correſponds exactly with the doctrine delivered by Chriſt. See alſo lib. iv. p. 634. where he aſſerts that God will pardon no ſins without puniſhment, "except ſuch as may have been committed involuntarily or through ignorance," which indeed is pronounced too harſh and ſevere, even by Clement himſelf. Finally, in lib. ii. p. 488. we have the words of his ſon Iſidore ſeverely rebuking thoſe who, with a view of palliating their ſins, ſay, "I found myſelf irreſiſtibly compelled to do ſo and ſo; — in what I have done I have not acted willingly, I was ſeduced into it." Men, he adds, by the aſſiſtance of the rational part, (that is the immortal ſoul of divine origin,) have it in their power, and ought to ſubdue the inferior creature (that is, the brutal ſenſitive ſoul).

[*z*] Clemens Alexandrinus, in his *Stromata*, lib. iii. p. 510. deſcribes

CENT. II.

The moral doctrine of Baſilides.

and in part by the objectionable opinions which he maintained in regard to the lawfulneſs of concealing one's religion, of denying Chriſt in times of peril, of partaking of the fleſh of victims offered to idols, of diſparaging the eſtimation and authority of the martyrs, and peradventure as to various other points [*a*]. The Baſilidian

deſcribes the Baſilidians who were reſident at Alexandria in his time as being very debauched and diſſolute in their manners. Some of them appeared to think that, having attained to the utmoſt ſummit of virtuous perfection, no further reſtraint on their appetites was neceſſary; others conſidered themſelves as elected to ſalvation, and deemed it impoſſible for them, by any ſort of tranſgreſſion, to fall from that ſtate of felicity. But Clement, as became an honeſt man and a lover of truth, adds, that theſe reprobate Baſilidians gave a very wrong interpretation to the precepts of their maſters, and oppoſes to them the very words of Baſilides. Οἱ πρωτότοκες, ſays he, τῶν δογμάτων ὐ ταῦτα ἀυτοῖς πράττειν συγχωρῆσιν. *Inventores ſive patres dogmatum quæ probant, non poteſtatem illis fecerunt talia perpetrandi.* Clement therefore, although inimical to the Baſilidian ſect, yet found himſelf compelled in juſtice to acknowledge that neither in the writings of Baſilides, nor in thoſe of his ſon Iſidore, was there any thing whatever that ſhould contenance men in a ſinful courſe of life, and that the diſſolute conduct of the diſciples could, in no ſhape be charged on the doctrine or precepts of the maſter.

[*a*] Nothing whatever excited a greater diſlike to Baſilides amongſt the orthodox Chriſtians than the ſentiments entertained by him reſpecting the martyrs. By the unanimous voice of the Chriſtian church the martyrs were exalted to the right hand of the Majeſty on high, and pronounced worthy of having almoſt divine honours paid to them; but, according to Baſilides, their merits were, by no means, of a tranſcendant nature; neither ought any greater reverence to be paid to their memory than to that of other pious perſons. The ancient writers indeed, who treat of the doctrine of Baſilides are not ſtrictly in uniſon with each other, neither do they all attribute to it the ſame degree of turpitude; but in this they are all agreed, that it was every way calculated to enfeeble and corrupt the minds of Chriſtians, and ſeduce them

Baſilidian ſect flouriſhed for a conſiderable time, and had not become altogether extinct even ſo late as the fourth century. CENT. II.

The moral doctrine of Baſilides.

XLIX. Whatever them from that fidelity and allegiance which they owed to their divine maſter. Nor can any one doubt of this who ſhall attentively conſider even thoſe extracts alone from the writings of Baſilides which are to be met with in Clement of Alexandria. The opinion entertained by him reſpecting the martyrs was connected, as muſt readily be perceived by any one who will compare together what is ſaid by ancient writers reſpecting the morals and conduct of the Baſilidians, with another and ſtill more grievous error, namely, that it was lawful for Chriſtians, not only to conceal and diſguiſe their religion, but alſo, in caſe of life or fortune being brought into danger, even to deny and abjure the very name of Chriſt. The Baſilidian doctrine, as to this point, is given us in the following terms by Irenæus (*adv. Hæreſ.* lib. i. cap. xxiv. p. 102.) with whom other ancient authors agree; *Sicut Filium* (that is Chriſt, who for a certain time joined himſelf to the man Jeſus) *incognitum omnibus eſſe, ſic et ipſos a nemine oportere cognoſci. – – – Quapropter et parati ſunt ad negationem* (Chriſti) *qui tales ſunt, immo magis ne pati quidem propter nomen* (Chriſti) *poſſunt, cum ſint omnibus ſimiles.* (that is, becauſe they live juſt in the ſame way as the heathen worſhippers, and conform themſelves in every reſpect to the manners of the people amongſt whom they happen to reſide). That men of a ſelfiſh turn of mind ſhould readily have embraced this error, in thoſe perilous times when the Chriſtians were daily made to undergo puniſhments of the moſt horrible nature, and frequently had to meet death under all its terrific forms, cannot in the leaſt be wondered at; and we are certain that it found acceptance with many, particularly the Gnoſtics. Nor were the Baſilidians unſupplied with ſomewhat of a ſpecious and impoſing argument whereby to colour and extenuate this perfidious kind of conduct. For ſince they denied that Chriſt, the ſon of the Supreme Deity, ever actually coaleſced in one and the ſame perſon with the man Jeſus, and maintained that it was the man Jeſus alone (Chriſt having quitted him) who ſuffered upon the croſs, they might, without falſehood, affirm that they did not worſhip as the Deity, or the offspring of the Deity, him whom the Romans, at the inſtigation of the

CENT. II.

XLIX. Whatever might be the errors and depravity of Saturninus and Baſilides, Alexandria produced,

The ſyſtem of Carpocrates.

Jews put to death, neither did they rely on him for ſalvation. Nay, they might have gone the length of adding, that they conſidered Jeſus who was crucified, as a ſinner, who had merited the grievous puniſhment thathe underwent; for that ſuch was their opinion is manifeſt from the words of Baſilides which we have quoted above. And that they were accuſtomed, in defence of their conduct, to have recourſe to ſome ſuch quibbling as this, is plainly to be collected from Irenæus; who repreſents them as maintaining that "men ought not to confeſs him who was actually crucified," (*i. e.* the man Jeſus, out of whom Chriſt had departed previouſly to his being affixed to the croſs,) "but him who came in the form of man, and was ſuppoſed to have been crucified." Men profeſſing ſentiments like theſe might well remain ſafe and ſecure in the very midſt of the enemies of Chriſtianity, who had no idea, as appears from Pliny, that any Chriſtian would revile Chriſt crucified. The diſtinction thus made between Chriſt and Jeſus was a thing of which they entertained not the leaſt conception. The Baſilidians then, were particularly anxious, by every means in their power, to avoid being confounded with thoſe Chriſtians who were denounced by the Roman laws. This led them to do as well as ſubmit to ſeveral things from which all true Chriſtians would have recoiled with horror. One of theſe undoubtedly was that of being preſent at the pagan ſacrifices, and partaking of the meats offered to falſe gods. Ancient writers caſt this in their teeth with all imaginable rancour, but are entirely ſilent as to the motive; which may, however, readily be conceived from what we have noticed above. All true Chriſtians made it a point, conformably to the injunction of St. Paul, never to be preſent at any of the ſacrifices or religious feaſts of the heathens, and conſidered it as an abomination to touch meats that had been offered to the pagan deities, circumſtances which rendered their detection at all times extremely eaſy. The Baſilidians therefore, who made ſecurity their ſtudy, had recourſe to an oppoſite line of conduct, and neither ſcrupled to mingle with the heathen worſhippers in their ſacrifices, nor to feaſt with them afterwards in their temples on the remnants of the victims. If life or ſafety required it, they were alſo ready boldly to avow that they had nothing to do with Chriſt, meaning,

produced, nearly about the ſame time, in the perſon of Carpocrates, a character by far worſe than

CENT. II.

The ſyſtem of Carpocrates.

meaning, in this caſe, the man that was actually crucified, not the true Chriſt whom they ſuppoſed to have deſcended from above, and, after ſojourning here on earth for a while, to have again returned to his Father's abode. By means of this their perfidious diſſimulation they ſucceeded, according to ancient authors, in eſcaping the perſecutions which befel the other Chriſtians; and we, conſequently, find no martyrs of the Baſilidian ſect. The Baſilidians, in fact, were not in the leaſt ambitious of martyrdom. This being caſt in their teeth by the other Chriſtians, who were accuſtomed to place no little part of their felicity and glory in the number of their martyrs, and to conſider an eagerneſs after martyrdom as a characteriſtic feature of the true church, Baſilides and his ſon retorted by aſſailing the credit of the martyrs, and maintaining that thoſe Chriſtians acted very unadviſedly who either profeſſed a wiſh to pour out their own blood in the cauſe of Chriſt, or contended that a greater degree of ſanctity and honour ought to be aſcribed to the martyrs than to other Chriſtians. By way of ſupporting himſelf in this opinion he aſſumed it for a fact, as appears from his own words, as cited by Clement, *Stromat.* lib. iv. p. 600. that the evils which men ſuffer in this life are nothing more than the puniſhment of offences committed by the ſoul either during its reſidence in the body, or in a previous ſtate of exiſtence. God being all juſt, he ſaid, it was impoſſible that he ſhould ſuffer an innocent and unoffending perſon to undergo pain and affliction; and we were therefore, of neceſſity, compelled to believe that men muſt, by their tranſgreſſions, have merited whatever calamities we may ſee befall them. This then being aſſumed, his concluſion was, that ſo far from attaching any peculiar degree of ſanctity to the character of thoſe Chriſtians who were puniſhed and put to death by the Romans on account of their religion, we ſhould rather conſider them as belonging to the claſs of thoſe who, either in this life or in a previous ſtate of exiſtence, had grievouſly offended the Deity by their tranſgreſſions. In defence of this opinion he went, as we have above ſeen, the length of aſſerting that even Jeſus of Nazareth himſelf, in whoſe body Chriſt the Son of the Deity for a while took up his abode, in being crucified underwent merely the puniſhment due to his own proper offences. The horror excited even by the bare mention of this

CENT. II.

The ſyſtem of Carpocrates.

than either of theſe two, nay, a very monſter of a man, if faith is to be placed in thoſe accounts of his tenets and doctrine which are given us by ancient as well as more recent authors. To confeſs the truth, however, the more ancient writers have not only left us a very lame and unintelligible account of the Carpocratian ſyſtem of diſcipline, but appear to have failed in arriving at any thing like a perfect comprehenſion of it themſelves, nay, in ſome reſpects, to have actually miſrepreſented it, whilſt at the ſame time, in regard to other particulars, they themſelves ſeem to have been much miſunderſtood by more recent authors [*b*]. The philoſophy

this doctrine in the minds of thoſe Chriſtians whoſe diſcipline was founded on the ſacred writings, occaſioned the author of it to be viewed by them in the moſt unfavourable light. By Baſilides himſelf, however, the principle was not conſidered as unjuſtifiable or injurious to the Deity, inaſmuch as, according to his fooliſh way of thinking, a diſtinction exiſted between Chriſt the Son of God and the man Jeſus, Chriſt having been a compound of two perſons, the one human, the other divine. That ſentiments like theſe, differing ſo widely from what were commonly entertained, and apparently calculated to do away every kind of piety towards God, ſhould have cauſed the Chriſtians in general to think unfavourably of the whole moral diſcipline of Baſilides, cannot in the leaſt be wondered at, although it was certainly in great part far from being of that diſſolute and unſeemly character which was commonly attributed to it. Conſiderable grounds for ſuſpicion were likewiſe afforded by the depraved and perverſe lives led by many of the Baſilidians, who, by an abuſe of the precepts of their maſter, endeavoured to juſtify themſelves in all manner of iniquity.

[*b*] For the religion of Carpocrates our leading authority is Irenæus, who in c. xxv. of his firſt book *adverſ. Hæreſ.* enters into the nature of it at much length, but in a manner by no means either comprehenſive, diſtinct, or perſpicuous. Reſpecting his moral diſcipline ſome few particulars are given

CENT. II.

The ſyſtem of Carpocrates.

ſophy of Carpocrates reſpecting the Deity, the world, and the nature of man, differed but little from the ſentiments entertained on theſe ſubjects by the reſt of thoſe whom we commonly term Gnoſtics. He believed, for inſtance, that there exiſted a Deity ſupreme over every thing, and, in point of nature, infinitely beyond the reach of all human comprehenſion; —that of this Deity had been generated certain Æons or immortal and immutable natures; —that matter was eternal, and that it was the fountain or ſource of every thing evil and pernicious. He further held that the world had been founded by angels who, in point of nature, were far inferior to the Supreme Being; —that the rational ſouls of men had been ſent down from the regions above into terrene bodies as into a ſort of priſon [*c*]; —that the founders

given us by Clement of Alexandria, *Stromat.* lib. iii. p. 511. & ſeq. that appear to be deſerving of credit, inaſmuch as they were extracted from a book written by Epiphanes the ſon of Carpocrates, *de Juſtitia Dei.* What other particulars we find recorded by Epiphanius, Tertullian, Theodoret, and other hæreſiologiſts, are partly tranſcribed from Irenæus, and in part collected from vulgar report; neither do they altogether accord with each other. It is utterly out of the power of any one therefore, to exhibit any thing like a correct and complete view of the Carpocratian ſyſtem of religion in all its parts. Many things are wholly omitted by Irenæus, which it is impoſſible for us to ſupply, even in the way of conjecture, and on others he barely touches in a tranſient manner, without troubling himſelf to give us either comment or explanation.

[*c*] What the ſentiments of Carpocrates were reſpecting the ſoul is very obſcure and uncertain. Of this indeed, we are pretty well aſſured, that he conſidered the ſouls of men as of divine origin, and as having been ſent down from above into theſe earthly bodies as into a priſon: but as to what kind of nature he might attribute to them, or to what cauſe he might aſcribe

CENT. II.

The ſyſtem of Carpocrates.

ders of this world, after extinguiſhing amongſt mankind every knowledge of the true and Supreme Deity, had arrogated to themſelves the title and honours of gods, and endeavoured by every means to prevent the ſouls impriſoned in bodies of matter from underſtanding that there was any nature of a more excellent or perfect kind; — that conſiderable aſſiſtance was afforded to them in this matter by a certain angel malignant in his very nature, that is the devil, whoſe ſtudy it is to draw over mankind from the true God to the prince of this world; — that the ſouls who are ſo unfortunate as to be thus ſeduced by this evil angel, upon their being releaſed by death from one body, are conſtrained to migrate into another, whilſt ſuch as ſucceſsfully reſiſt his wiles, and thoſe of the founders of this world, aſcend, on the diſſolution of the body, to God the parent of all ſouls. All this has nothing in it at all incredible, and ſufficiently accords with thoſe principles on which the whole Gnoſtic philoſophy was built.

aſcribe their being thus conſigned to terrene bodies, we have no ground ſufficient to warrant even a conjecture. There is however, a paſſage cited by Clement of Alexandria (*Stromat.* lib. iii. p. 513.) from the book written by Epiphanes the ſon of Carpocrates, *de Juſtitia Dei*, from whence it appears that the latter conceived the ſouls of men to have had their appetites and inſtincts implanted in them by the Deity himſelf, not only thoſe of an harmleſs or an indifferent nature, but ſuch likewiſe as are unlawful and prohibited. Hence it is apparent, not only that his opinion reſpecting the original nature of the ſoul was a very extraordinary one, and vaſtly different from that entertained by the reſt of the Gnoſtics, but alſo that he did not, like others of the Gnoſtics, conceive man to have been endowed with two ſouls, the one merely ſenſitive, concupiſcent, and deduced from matter, the other rational, and free from every diſorderly appetite.

L. An

CENT. II

The Carpocratian theology.

L. Ancient authors, however, leave us entirely in the dark as to the mode in which Carpocrates endeavoured to make the Chriſtian religion accommodate itſelf to theſe principles. The doctrine he taught is commonly reported to have been that Jeſus was begotten of Joſeph and Mary, according to the ordinary law of nature, and that he was ſuperior to the reſt of mortals in no other reſpect than that of having a more excellent ſoul reſiding within him, and being endowed by the Deity with certain qualities and virtues by means whereof he was enabled to overcome the power of the founders of this world. But there is not wanting abundant cauſe for ſuſpicion that, as to this, his tenets have been miſrepreſented, and that, in point of fact, he, like other Gnoſtics, made a diſtinction between the man Jeſus and Chriſt, conſidering the latter as one of the Æons, and ſon of the Supreme Deity [*d*]. With regard to

[*d*] All the writers of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory agree in declaring that by none of the Gnoſtics was the character of our Bleſſed Saviour held in ſo little reſpect as by Carpocrates. Chriſt, if we may give credit to their ſtatement, was conſidered by Carpocrates as having been a mere man, begotten of Joſeph and Mary according to that law by which all other mortals are produced; but a mind of greater ſtrength and dignity than uſual having accidentally fallen to his lot, the Deity was pleaſed, in addition, to confer on him divers virtues to which other men were ſtrangers, and commiſſion him to enlighten the human race, and withdraw them from the worſhip of the founders of this world. That ſuch were his ſentiments they are led to believe from the following words of Irenæus; *Jeſum autem* (dicit Carpocrates) *e Joſepho natum, et cum ſimilis reliquis hominibus fuerit, diſtaſſe a reliquis ſecundum id, quod anima ejus firma et munda cum eſſet, commemorata fuerit quæ viſa eſſent ſibi in ea circumlatione, quæ fuiſſet ingenito Deo.* According to this, Carpocrates believed that the ſoul of Jeſus, previouſly to its connection with *the* body, exiſted juſt in the ſame way as all other ſouls, with the Deity

CENT. II.

to the cauſe however for which Chriſt was ſent down by his Father to mankind, it is impoſſible, if

The Carpocratian theology.

Deity in the regions above, but that, on its being ſent to occupy a body here below, it did not, like other ſouls, loſe all remembrance of what it had known and underſtood in its former ſtate, but having once obtained a clear perception of the truth, took care never again to loſe ſight of it, and conſequently maintained for itſelf a ſuperiority over other minds. This doctrine manifeſtly favours of Platoniſm, and the diſcipline of the oriental philoſophers. For Plato, as is well known, held that a knowledge of the truth is implanted in the ſoul by nature, but that, upon its junction with the body, this knowledge is obſcured, and an entire forgetfulneſs of every thing paſt takes place. Under the influence of this opinion, he maintained, that to enquire and gain knowledge is nothing more than to renew or recover the memory of things that had been before known but forgotten. When ſuch a ſoul as Carpocrates conceived Chriſt's to have been, became united to the material body begotten of Joſeph, it could not otherwiſe happen but that a man of an extraordinary and preeminent nature ſhould be thereby conſtituted. Of the aſſociation of any third or divine nature with the body and ſoul of Jeſus no mention occurs in theſe words of Irenæus: wherefore very learned men have been led to conclude that Carpocrates believed Jeſus to have been a man compoſed of a mortal body and an immortal ſoul, and nothing more. This opinion appears to be corroborated by ſeveral things which are ſubſequently recorded by Irenæus. In the firſt place we find it ſtated by him that certain of the Carpocratians were ſo arrogant as to aſſert that they themſelves were equal to Jeſus, (*ut ſe Jeſu dicant ſimiles*), others ſo mad as abſolutely to maintain that they were ſuperior to him, (*fortiores eo eſſe*), inaſmuch as they had received ſouls of the ſame degree and order as Chriſt's. But could it be poſſible, let me aſk, for any thing peculiarly great or divine to be attributed to Chriſt by perſons who were ſo ſottiſhly vain as to imagine that they themſelves were equal or even ſuperior to him? It is in the next place ſtated by Irenæus that the Carpocratians had painted likeneſſes of Chriſt, as well as other repreſentations of him, which they crowned, and held up to veneration in company with thoſe of the philoſophers Pythagoras,

CENT. II.

if his other tenets be duly conſidered, that Carpocrates, could have believed it to have been any

The Carpocratian theology.

thagoras, Plato, and Ariſtotle. When interrogated as to the way in which they had obtained theſe likeneſſes, they replied, that a portraiture of Chriſt had been painted by the command of Pilate. Theſe things certainly ſeem to prove that Chriſt was conſidered by the Carpocratians merely in the light of a philoſopher, and was placed by them on a level with Plato, Pythagoras, and the reſt. But upon purſuing the thread of Irenæus's diſcourſe, it appears to me that both ancient and modern writers have neglected to beſtow a due degree of attention on his words, and in conſequence thereof have failed in arriving at a juſt concluſion reſpecting the opinion which Carpocrates entertained of Chriſt: for which, however ſome excuſe is certainly to be found in the brevity and obſcurity of the writer's ſtyle. What I would remark is, that immediately after the words cited at the commencement of this note Irenæus goes on thus; *Et propter hoc ab eo* (the Supreme Deity) *miſſam eſſe ei* (the ſoul of Jeſus) *virtutem uti mundi Fabricatores effugere poſſet, et per omnes tranſgreſſa et in omnibus liberata adſcenderet ad eum.* Now allowing their due weight to theſe words, I cannot help feeling ſtrongly inclined to believe that Carpocrates thought no leſs reſpectfully of Chriſt than Baſilides and other Gnoſtics, and held that one of the divine Æons, (for the Gnoſtics term theſe *virtues*, in Greek δυνάμεις) deſcended into the man Jeſus who, on account of the ſuperior excellence of his ſoul, was, beyond all other mortals, deſerving of ſuch honour, at the commencement of his miniſtry, and continued with him during his progreſs; but that upon his being ſeized and condemned to ſuffer death, this Æon departed out of him, and re-aſcended to the regions above. This, at the leaſt, is evident, that Carpocrates recogniſed in Jeſus three diſtinct parts; 1. a body begotten in the courſe of nature; 2. a ſoul ſent down from the immediate reſidence of the Deity for the purpoſe of being aſſociated with this body; and 3. a virtue divinely communicated to this ſoul on account of its ſuperior excellence: which virtue, in all probability, ought to be accounted as one and the ſame with that Chriſt whom the leaders of the various Gnoſtic factions pretended to diſtinguiſh from the man Jeſus. With regard, therefore, to what is reported by Irenæus as to ſome of this ſect having

CENT. II.

any other than that he might aboliſh the worſhip of a plurality of gods, or to ſpeak after the

The Carpocratian theology.

ing accounted themſelves equal to Jeſus, and the whole of them having placed him no higher than on a level with the philoſophers, it muſt be conſidered as not referring to *the virtue* which for a time reſided in Jeſus, or to Chriſt the Son of the Deity, but merely to the man Jeſus taken in the abſtract. This explication of the tenets of the Carpocratians reſpecting Chriſt, derives no little confirmation from what Irenæus ſays of their having taught that ſouls were ſaved "through faith," *i. e.* in Chriſt, "and Charity." For if the ſentiments entertained by Carpocrates reſpecting Chriſt were what they are commonly repreſented to have been, it is impoſſible to annex any ſenſe or meaning to theſe words. How could *faith* in a mere man be held up as the means of bringing any one to ſalvation? Certain of this ſect, we are told, made it a matter of boaſt that they were poſſeſſed of ſouls in no reſpect inferior to the ſoul of Jeſus; nay, ſome even went ſo far as to aſſert that they were endowed with ſouls ſuperior to that of Jeſus. Both, therefore muſt have felt perſuaded that they poſſeſſed within themſelves the ſame power of ſucceſsfully combating the founders of this world as Jeſus Chriſt did. But if a faith in Jeſus Chriſt, ſuppoſing them to have conſidered him merely as an eminent man, could, in their opinion have led to ſalvation, ſurely they muſt have believed that a faith in thoſe men who were equal or even ſuperior to Jeſus Chriſt would be attended with equally beneficial conſequences. But this would have been contradicting themſelves, inaſmuch as it would have been admitting that a faith in Chriſt was not abſolutely neceſſary to ſalvation. But if Carpocrates made a diſtinction between Chriſt and the man Jeſus, as I think he did, we may readily perceive in what ſenſe he might ſay "that ſalvation was obtained through faith in Chriſt." In ſuch caſe there can be no doubt but his meaning muſt have been that a faith in that Virtue, or Æon, the Son of the Supreme Deity, who animated and governed the man Jeſus in the execution of his divine commiſſion here on earth, would obtain from the father celeſtial happineſs for all ſuch ſouls as might be poſſeſſed of it. What we have thus ſuggeſted will receive alſo conſiderable illuſtration and ſupport from the following words of Irenæus, if properly attended to. *Jeſu autem dicunt* (*i. e.* the Carpocratians) *animam in Judæorum*

the manner of the Gnoſtics, put an end to the dominion of the founders of this world, and after

CENT. II.

The Carpocratian theology.

orum conſuetudine nutritam contempſiſſe eos (the founders of this world) *et propter hoc virtutes accepiſſe, per quas evacuavit quæ fuerunt in pœnis paſſiones, quæ inerant hominibus.* Commentators, as is not unuſual with them, have paſſed theſe words of Irenæus over without remark, although they certainly call for attention and explanation far beyond many others on which an abundance of pains has been beſtowed. For any illuſtration of this paſſage therefore we are driven to depend wholly on ourſelves. It may be remarked then, (I.) that Irenæus here repreſents Carpocrates as having taught "that the ſoul of Jeſus contemned the fabricators of this world," or thoſe angels who made this world, and hold dominion over it: which is much the ſame thing as if he had ſaid, that Jeſus did not worſhip thoſe gods whom the nations of the earth held in reverence, but confined his adoration to the one only True and Supreme Deity. (II.) It is added as the reaſon why the ſoul of Jeſus entertained a contempt for the founders of this world, — *quod Judæorum conſuetudine nutrita eſſet:* that is, the Jews held the gods of the nations in contempt, and worſhipped only one Deity, therefore Jeſus, who was born and educated amongſt the Jews, was led to do the like. I ſhall not ſtay to remark that what is thus ſtated correſponds but ill with the account which Irenæus juſt before gives us of the Carpocratian tenets reſpecting the virtue and fortitude naturally belonging to the ſoul of Jeſus, or that it reflects but little honour on the character of Jeſus: but I cannot paſs over this, that if the doctrine of Carpocrates be rightly conveyed in theſe words, he muſt have excluded the God of the Jews from the number of the angels who framed this world, and regarded him as the Supreme Deity; which, if it were true, would ſeparate him widely indeed from all others of the Gnoſtics. For if the ſoul of Jeſus, in worſhipping one God alone, and treating with contempt the founders of this world, imitated the example of the Jewiſh people, it follows, of neceſſity, that the Jews could not have worſhipped the founders of the world, but muſt have confined themſelves to the ſervice of the one Supreme God. But it is impoſſible to believe that Carpocrates could have thought thus honourably of the Jews and their religion. For, not to notice other things, we have in Clement of Alexandria a very

CENT. II. after having excited in the ſouls that had long been languiſhing under the dominion of ſuperſtition

The Carpocratian theology.

very ſtriking paſſage cited from Epiphanes, the ſon of Carpocrates, in which he derides the Jewiſh law, and openly contends that the beſt part of it is nonſenſical and childiſh. *Stromat.* lib. iii. p. 514. Either Irenæus, therefore, muſt have here been guilty of an error, or the Latin tranſlator muſt have much miſrepreſented his meaning. (III.) Irenæus points out the reward which, according to the Carpocratians, the Deity conferred on the ſoul of Jeſus on account of the contempt thus ſhewn by him for the founders of the world: *viz. Virtutes per quas evacuavit quæ fuerunt in pœnis paſſiones quæ inerant hominibus.* The laſt three words are unintelligible, and may therefore be conſidered as having been ſomehow or other corrupted: but the meaning intended to be conveyed by the others is clear enough; namely that the Deity communicated to the ſoul of Jeſus certain virtues or powers by means whereof it might *evacuate*, that is triumph over, the pains and afflictions to which his body was expoſed. Carpocrates, therefore, believed that Jeſus in reality underwent torments and death, but that in conſequence of the virtues divinely communicated to him he was inſenſible of their ſeverity and power. As to the particular way in which he conceived this to have been brought about, whether, for inſtance, he imagined Jeſus to have been deprived by the Deity of all ſenſation, or whether he conceived the Deity to have inſpired Jeſus with a fortitude and elevation of mind ſuperior to every evil that could be inflicted on him, we are not competent to ſpeak. We ſhould evidently do wrong however were we to confound theſe virtues by which Jeſus was enabled to triumph over the pains of the croſs, with that one great *virtue* which reſided in him during the time that he lived at liberty and wrought his miracles amongſt the Jews. The latter he was underſtood to have poſſeſſed previouſly to his being ſeized on and crucified, with the former he was not ſuppoſed to have been endowed until in the very act of contending with torments and death. Theſe things conſidered, we may conclude Carpocrates to have taught that that great virtue, which had its reſidence in Jeſus during the time of his teaching and working miracles amongſt the Jews, departed out of him when he was about to ſuffer: but that the Deity did not leave him comfortleſs, but ſupplied him with ſuch other ſuccours from above

ſtition a wiſh to know and worſhip the Supreme Deity, might point out to them the way in which this knowledge of the True God would enable them to triumph over the wiles of the devil as well as the power of the founders of this world, and qualify them for re-aſcending, on the diſſolution of the body, to their original ſtations in the realms of light. CENT. II.

The moral diſcipline of Carpocrates.

LI. All ancient writers concur in repreſenting the moral diſcipline of Carpocrates as in the higheſt degree vile and pernicious, and the lives led by his followers as having conſequently been groſs, libidinous, and filthy in the extreme. Nor can we altogether withhold our credit from this: for it is certain that he countenanced a community of women, and inculcated ſeveral other things which had a manifeſt tendency to encourage men in various wicked and flagitious practices. There are not wanting, however, circumſtances which incline us to believe that the inferences deduced from his tenets have not been in every inſtance correct, and that the turpitude of certain of his maxims was tempered and corrected by doctrine of a very different character and tendency contained in others [*e*]. Nor can I eaſily bring myſelf to believe

above as effectually prevented his ſoul from ſinking under the weight of thoſe manifold and grievous injuries and ſufferings to which his corporeal frame was expoſed.

[*e*] Nothing can poſſibly be conceived more infamous and groſs than the moral doctrine of Carpocrates was, if any faith is to be placed in the accounts given us of it by all ancient writers. According to them he maintained; (I.) That there is nothing naturally evil in itſelf, but that all diſtinction between good and bad actions exiſts merely in human opinion and laws; and, conſequently, that every one, in a moral point of view, is perfectly at liberty to do as he may like. (II.) That women, and every thing

CENT. II. believe what is handed down to us reſpecting a place

The moral diſcipline of Carpocrates.

elſe belonging to this world, ought to be common, for that it was the will of God that all men ſhould poſſeſs an equal right in every thing. (III.) That the road to everlaſting felicity lay open to thoſe ſouls alone who devoted themſelves to the perpetration of every vile and flagitious action, which it was poſſible for the heart of man to conceive. I paſs over certain things leſs heinous and diſguſting, inaſmuch as every thing that can be deemed impious and deteſtable is certainly comprehended in the above. Conformably to theſe principles it is ſaid to have been cuſtomary for the Carpocratians, in their nocturnal aſſemblies, to extinguiſh the light and engage in a promiſcuous libidinous intercourſe. Clem. Alex. *Stromat.* lib. iii. p. 514. Of the above, that which I have noticed in the third place, I conceive to be a mere calumny, which had its origin probably in ſome tenet or other not ſufficiently underſtood. For can any one poſſibly believe that a man who regarded the Deity as juſt, good, and beneficent, who conceived men's ſouls to be the offspring of this Deity, and who entertained a reverence for Chriſt; can any one, I ſay, for a moment perſuade himſelf that a man of this deſcription (and that Carpocrates was ſuch an one is evident from the paſſages cited by Clement of Alexandria out of the writings of his ſon Epiphanes,) ſhould have maintained that none but ſouls contaminated by every ſpecies of iniquity, and as it were glutted with ſenſual indulgence, would ever find their way back to the Deity, the fountain of all good? Equally void of any ſolid foundation do I conſider what is told us reſpecting the nocturnal orgies of his diſciples. For this opinion I ſhall preſently aſſign certain reaſons that I rather think the reader will conſider as carrying with them ſome weight. As to the firſt and ſecond of the tenets above noticed, they are avowed without reſerve by Epiphanes, the ſon and moſt ſtrenuous defender of Carpocrates and his opinions, from whoſe book *de Juſtitia Dei*, Clement of Alexandria (*Stromat.* lib. iii. p. 512. & ſeq.) gives us ſome long quotations, in which it is endeavoured, by various arguments, to prove that many things are by human laws pronounced to be evil which in point of fact have nothing whatever of evil or iniquity belonging to them. The Deity, it is boldly affirmed by this writer, deſigned every good thing which he beſtowed on mortals, to be uſed and enjoyed by them in common. Mankind, by their laws, however, have deſtroyed this communion of uſe, and introduced a ſeparate property in things.

Human

a place amongſt the gods having been aſſigned to

CENT. II.

Human laws, therefore, he maintains, are repugnant to the divine will. Theſe maxims are evidently inculcated by him with a reference to matrimony, and what are termed men's goods: for he ſays expreſsly, that women, according to the divine law, ought to be common, and that the ſame principle applies to fruits, corn, and animals: and that it is merely of human ordination that thoſe who aſſert their right to the enjoyment of theſe things in common are termed adulterers and thieves. This paſſage is followed by another even worſe. For he pronounces the law "Thou ſhalt not covet," to be abſolutely ridiculous, inaſmuch as the deſires and appetites of the ſoul were implanted in it by the Deity; and ſtill more ridiculous, he ſays, is the addition of the Jewiſh legiſlator, "Thou ſhalt not covet thy neighbour's goods;" for it was impoſſible that the Deity, who implanted deſires in the ſoul, could have commanded that theſe deſires ſhould be ſubdued and extinguiſhed. But the moſt ridiculous thing of all he pronounces to be that injunction of the ſame legiſlator, "Thou ſhalt not covet thy neighbour's wife;" for there can be no doubt but that the Deity deſigned all women to be common. Theſe things certainly admit of no palliation whatever; and it ſhould therefore ſeem to be eſtabliſhed beyond a queſtion by the words of Carpocrates himſelf, or at leaſt thoſe of his ſon, that nothing whatever was conſidered by him as unlawful, but that theft, fornication, adultery, &c. although prohibited by human laws, were, in his opinion, conſentaneous to the divine will. Which opinion is even ſtill more impious than that which is attributed to him by the early Chriſtian writers: *viz.* "That all actions are in their nature indifferent, and that it is by human laws alone that certain of them are pronounced to be evil." For whoever maintains that the luſts and appetites by which mankind are diſturbed, were implanted in their minds by the Deity himſelf, and that the actions to which men are prompted by ſuch luſts and appetites, are conſentaneous to the divine will, muſt of neceſſity hold that theft, fornication, robbery, adultery, &c. are to be regarded as good works. Hence then we may perceive that it was not altogether, without grounds or reaſon that ſome were led to aſſert that Carpocrates believed heaven to be acceſſible to ſuch ſouls only as had in this life devoted themſelves to the perpetration of every ſpecies of crime and iniquity. My belief, however, is that the man did not propound the above principles to his diſciples

The moral diſcipline of Carpocrates.

CENT. II. to his ſon Epiphanes by the inhabitants of the city

The moral diſcipline of Carpocrates.

ciples at large, but only to certain ſelect and confidential ones. A teacher who like Carpocrates maintained that our bleſſed Saviour's doctrine was of a two-fold deſcription, the one popular, the other ſecret, would naturally have recourſe to a ſimilar method of inſtruction, and addreſs himſelf to the multitude after a different manner from that which he adopted with regard to his friends and intimates. The atrocity and impiety of his opinions and doctrine, however, are in no degree extenuated by this. Notwithſtanding all theſe things, however, I cannot help confeſſing myſelf ſtrongly inclined to believe that the wickedneſs and depravity of Carpocrates could never have been ſo prepoſterouſly abſurd and loathſome as is commonly imagined, but that, to the tenets above noticed, which are undoubtedly of the moſt vile and abominable nature, there muſt have been ſubjoined others, calculated, in a certain degree, to correct their turpitude and counteract their poiſon. Every one acquainted with human affairs muſt well know that if certain parts of various ſyſtems of diſcipline were to be ſeparated from the reſt, and conſidered by themſelves, they would aſſume, not only an abſurd, but an altogether impious and execrable character; but let them only be reſtored to their proper ſituation, and again connected with thoſe things from which they were disjoined, and moſt of their deformity will at once diſappear. Ancient writers bring us acquainted with but a very ſmall portion of the Carpocratian philoſophy and religion, and even this is exhibited by them in a very looſe and diſorderly manner. Could we obtain a view of the entire body, with all its various joints and ſinews, it is very poſſible that the things which now produce affright, and fill us with a certain degree of horror, might, I will not ſay put on an unexceptionable and attractive appearance, for that certainly is not within the reach of poſſibility, but aſſume ſomewhat of a leſs hideous and diſguſting aſpect. In truth, it exceeds my powers of comprehenſion to underſtand how a man who, to paſs over other things, believed the Deity to be, in every ſenſe, perfection itſelf, who referred the ſeeds of all iniquity to matter, who conſidered immortal ſouls during their reſidence in the body to be confined, as it were, within a priſon, who maintained that the Deity was anxious for the deliverance and ſalvation of theſe ſouls, and that Chriſt had pointed out to them the way of extricating themſelves from the darkneſs of matter; how ſuch a man, I ſay, could look upon

city of Sama, in the iſland of Cephalonia [*f*]. Like upon *virtue* as merely an empty ſound, and believe that every one was at liberty to follow the dictates of his luſts and appetites. Still more incomprehenſible does this become to me when I perceive, what is apparent, even from the paſſages cited out of the writings of his ſon, that the man thus held up to us as ſuch a monſter of iniquity, was in full poſſeſſion of his reaſon. Then, we have the teſtimony of Irenæus expreſsly ſtating Carpocrates to have taught that men were to be ſaved through faith and charity, διὰ πίστεως καὶ ἀγάπης σώζεσθαι. Now a man who entertains this opinion, let him expound it in what manner he may, muſt certainly condemn any injuries done to others, and require that his followers ſhould cultivate ſome ſort of acquaintance with both juſtice and virtue, which is in direct oppoſition to the dogma generally attributed to Carpocrates, "that no actions are naturally evil in themſelves, and that the diſtinction between good and bad actions exiſts merely in human laws and opinions." For if future felicity is to be acquired by the exerciſe of love and good offices towards others, it neceſſarily follows that there muſt be ſome divine law in exiſtence commanding us to abſtain from every thing that may injure our fellow creatures, and to do thoſe things which may contribute to their welfare. Laſtly, it ſtrikes me as particularly deſerving of remark, that the ſame Irenæus who exhibits the Carpocratians in ſuch an unfavourable point of view as to other things, ſtands forward as their patron and defender againſt thoſe who reproached them with the commiſſion of crimes and offences of the deepeſt dye; and ſays that he could by no means give credit to the rumours that were prevalent of their iniquities; καὶ εἰ μὲν πράσσεται παρ' αὐτοῖς τὰ ἄθεα καὶ ἔκθετμα, καὶ ἀπειρημένα, ἐγω οὐκ ἂν πιστεύσαιμι. *Et ſi quidem fiant hæc apud eos quæ ſunt irreligioſa, et injuſta, et vetita, ego nequaquam credam.* Surely this may be accounted teſtimony of no ſmall weight, coming as it does from one who was in other reſpects their moſt hoſtile adverſary. Poſſibly the doctrine of Carpocrates might be this,—that the diſtinction between good and bad actions had no exiſtence but in human laws, but at the ſame time that in the preſent corrupt and perverſe ſtate of things ſuch laws were proper and neceſſary.

CENT. II.

The moral diſcipline of Carpocrates.

[*f*] Clement of Alexandria, (*Stromat.* lib. iii. p. 511.) relates

CENT. II.

The moral diſcipline of Carpocrates.

Like the reſt of the Gnoſtics, he aſſerted that his tenets and doctrine were founded on the ſecret diſcipline communicated by Chriſt to a few only of his followers. Hence it is clear that he could

relates that Epiphanes, the ſon of Carpocrates of Alexandria, by a Cephalonian woman, a young man of vaſt attainments and promiſe, but who died at the age of ſeventeen, had a place aſſigned him amongſt the gods by the inhabitants of the city of Sama in the iſland of Cephalonia, and that divine honours were annually paid to him in that city, where were to be ſeen a magnificent temple, altar, &c. erected to his memory The ſame account, ſomewhat amplified, is to be met with in Epiphanius, *Hæreſ.* xxxii. p. 210. & 211. But it ſhould ſeem that this narrative is altogether of one and the ſame caſt, and equally undeſerving of credit, with that of Juſtin Martyr reſpecting the apotheoſis of Simon Magus, and the ſtatue erected to his memory by the Romans. For who can believe that the people of Sama, who were polytheiſts, and addicted to the ſuperſtitions of the Greeks, could have acted ſuch a ſtrangely inconſiſtent part as to aſſign a place amongſt their gods, and annually pay divine honours to a young man who was a Chriſtian, or at leaſt a worſhipper of Chriſt, and who held in deteſtation the gods of the Gentiles, whom, in common with his father, he believed to be a ſet of proud, malignant angels, the authors of this world, and the preſent calamitous ſtate of things in it? Then again, why confer theſe honours on Epiphanes, any more than on his father? — or his mother who was a Cephalonian, a woman of the country? In fact, I ſuſpect that, as in the caſe of Simon, ſo likewiſe in this of Epiphanes, an affinity between words and names has, owing to a want of caution in the firſt Chriſtians, given riſe to a moſt egregious error. Thoſe who are converſant with the Greek language well know that the word Ἐπιφανίων was a term very frequently made uſe of in the Grecian rites; and that it was common for the Greek writers to denominate the appearance of any particular deity ἐπιφανεια. The feſtivals inſtituted in commemoration of ſuch divine manifeſtations or appearances were alſo termed ἐπιφάνια. It ſtrikes me therefore as highly probable, that it might have been cuſtomary for the people of Sama to refer to ſome feſtival or other of this kind under the title of ἐπιφανεια, and that certain

could have attached but little weight or authority to the ſacred writings. He did not however reject them entirely, but ſeems in particular to have approved of the goſpel according to St. Matthew [g].

CENT. II.

The moral diſcipline of Carpocrates.

LII. In

certain Chriſtians of Egypt accidentally ſojourning in that city, but entirely unacquainted with the cuſtoms, religion, and names of the Greeks, being caught by the ſound of the word, and recollecting that Epiphanes, the ſon of Carpocrates of Alexandria, had a Cephalonian woman for his mother, haſtily ran away with the idea that this Ἐπιφάνια was a feſtival inſtituted by the people of Sama in honour of that Epiphanes. On their return to Alexandria it was natural for them to recount what they had thus witneſſed, and, as they thought, well underſtood: and hence, I take it, aroſe the fable of the apotheoſis of Epiphanes, and the expenſive honours that were annually paid to his memory by the people of Sama.

(g) Irenæus tells us that the Carpocratians in their writings (συγγράμμασιν) ſtated that their tenets and doctrine were communicated by Jeſus in a ſecret myſterious manner to his apoſtles, with an injunction that they ſhould make theſe things known only to certain ſelect and confidential perſons. Moſt of the Gnoſtics were accuſtomed to ſhelter themſelves behind a tale of this ſort by way of getting rid of any thing that might be urged againſt them out of the Books of the New Teſtament. The apoſtolic writings, they aſſerted, contained merely the ordinary religion of Chriſt, or that which was ſuited to the capacities of the multitude, a thing totally different from the ſublime and recondite Chriſtian diſcipline. Eventually, however, the very means which they thus took to forward their own cauſe, and depreciate the authority of the ſacred writings, were productive of conſequences directly the reverſe. For by admitting, as they did, that the books of the New Teſtament were the writings of Chriſt's apoſtles, and at the ſame time denying that their own tenets were derived from this ſource, they in fact ſupplied their adverſaries with two very powerful arguments in ſupport of the genuine Chriſtian faith. Since Carpocrates then pretended to have derived his ſyſtem of diſcipline from the ſecret communications of Chriſt to his apoſtles, we may naturally conclude that he held

CENT. II.

The ſyſtem of Valentine.

LII. In fecundity of genius however, extent of travels, reputation, number of diſciples, and various other reſpects, the heretics whom we have juſt been commemorating were left at an infinite diſtance behind by Valentine, who like them was born in Egypt, but having at the commencement of this century originated a new ſyſtem of diſcipline, and met with no little ſucceſs in the propagation of it amongſt his countrymen, was induced to transfer his abode to Rome (*b*). In this city and its neighbourhood he

held the books of the New Teſtament very cheap, and conſidered them as calculated merely for the multitude. As Irenæus, however, ſtates him in ſupport of his opinion reſpecting the tranſmigration of ſouls, to have adduced the words of St. Matthew, chap. v. ver. 25, 26. there ſeems to be reaſon for believing that he approved of the writings of that evangeliſt.

[*b*] Of all the Gnoſtic ſects, not one, with the exception of the Manichees, has more engaged the attention of antient writers in deſcribing its tenets and diſcipline than that of the Valentinians. Not to notice the more recent writers of the third, fourth, and fifth centuries, ſuch as Epiphanius, Theodoret, Auguſtin, and others, who have either regularly or incidentally been led to treat of this ſect and its tenets, we find, on recurring to the writers of the ſecond century, the æra of its origination, Irenæus devoting the firſt ſeven chapters of his work *Adverſus Hæreſes*, to a comprehenſive review of its diſcipline, Tertullian not only attacking its principles in a particular treatiſe, but alſo inveighing warmly againſt them in his book *de Præſcript. adv Hæret.* as well as in various other parts of his writings, and Clement of Alexandria very frequently adverting to them in his *Stromata*, for the purpoſe of expoſing their fallacy, and bringing them into diſcredit. Notwithſtanding this however, it would be eaſy to point out many things in the Valentinian ſyſtem of diſcipline, which are but partially intelligible, and in regard to which we cannot but wiſh for further information. The moſt natural concluſion is, that as to ſome particulars, the knowledge which theſe writers themſelves had acquired was but very imperfect,

he prevailed on ſuch a number of Chriſtians to embrace his corrupt opinions, that the church became alarmed, and, after having been twice excommunicated without effect, he was at length abſolutely and finally expelled from her boſom as a deſperate and incorrigible heretic. For-

CENT. II.

The ſyſtem of Valentine.

perfect, although as to others our ignorance no doubt may ariſe from their not having expreſſed themſelves with a ſufficient degree of perſpicuity and preciſion. There can be no doubt but that the Valentinian ſect was of more recent origin than thoſe of which we have already given an account, for it is pretty plainly to be collected from the teſtimony of ancient authors, that it had no regular exiſtence until after Valentine had quitted Italy and taken up his reſidence in the iſland of Cyprus; which unqueſtionably did not take place until about the middle of this century. Previouſly to this, Valentine, although he differed in opinion materially from other Chriſtians, and met with no little ſucceſs in the propagation of his errors, yet maintained communion with the church, and was willing to paſs for one of its members. That form of religion, however, which he conſidered as the true and genuine one, muſt have ſuggeſted itſelf to him at a much earlier period, inaſmuch as he had taught it in Egypt and at Rome many years prior to his excommunication and expulſion from the church. According to Clement of Alexandria, *Stromat.* lib. vii. p. 898. he was ſuppoſed to have been a pupil of Theodas the diſciple of St. Paul. If this be true, he muſt have lived in the firſt century, and attained to a great age. The interpretation given to the words of Clement as to this, by almoſt every writer who has adverted to them is, that Valentine made it a matter of boaſt that his diſcipline was founded on principles privately imparted by St. Paul. Nor does it appear to me at all unlikely, that this might be what Clement intended to convey. For it was the cuſtom of the Gnoſtics, who could not but admit that their opinions were at variance with the ſacred writings, to ſhelter themſelves behind certain ſecret communications from Chriſt and his apoſtles. I think it but right however to obſerve, that we have no expreſs ſtatement in Clement to the above effect. All that he ſays is ſimply this, that there were perſons who repreſented Valentine as having been a diſciple of Theodas. As to the authors of this rumour he is ſilent.

ſaking

CENT. II.

The ſyſtem of Valentine.

ſaking Italy therefore, he withdrew to the iſland of Cyprus, where, laying aſide all diſſimulation, he became the parent of a ſect, which in point of form and external obſervances differed in no material degree from other Chriſtian aſſemblies; but in opinions and tenets retained ſcarcely any reſemblance to them whatever. From this ſpot the ſect ſoon widely diffuſed itſelf throughout Aſia, Africa, and Europe. Valentine, it ſhould ſeem probable, ended his days in Cyprus, ſomewhat about the middle of this century. It is reported that the idea of inſtituting a new ſect firſt ſuggeſted itſelf to him in conſequence of his having been diſappointed in the attainment of the biſhopric of I know not what city, and that his conduct ought rather to be aſcribed to ambition than to error: but the hiſtory of his fortunes ſeems to give a complete contradiction to this [*i*].

LIII. The

(*i*) Tertullian in his diſcourſe *contra Valentin.* cap. iv. informs us that Valentine aſpired to a biſhopric, a ſtation for which his genius and eloquence appeared eminently to qualify him, but that the preference was given to a martyr, or more rightly a confeſſor: and, that filled with indignation at this, he became an opponent of the genuine religion, and ſet about eſtabliſhing a new ſect. Now as to the firſt part of this ſtatement, namely, that Valentine was diſappointed in the hope of being promoted to a biſhopric, there is nothing in it at all difficult of belief: but the latter part of it muſt undoubtedly be falſe, if what Tertullian himſelf and other ancient writers report reſpecting the fortunes of this man be true. For Tertullian in his book *de Præſcriptione Hæreticorum*, cap. xxx. p. 242. expreſsly repreſents him as for a long time practiſing diſſimulation, and ſtudiouſly gloſſing over his erroneous doctrines, not only during his reſidence in Egypt, but alſo afterwards at Rome. Which plainly proves that nothing could be farther from his intention than that of eſtabliſhing an heretical ſect. The ſame writer ſays, that led away by too great a deſire after knowledge, and an unbounded curioſity, he, by degrees for-

CENT. II.

The Valentinian Æons.

LIII. The leading principles of the Valentinian ſyſtem of diſcipline correſponded with thoſe

forſook the high road of truth, and laboured in diſſeminating his erroneous principles amongſt the Chriſtians at Rome. On this account he was twice ſubjected to a temporary excommunication, and as often received again into the boſom of the church, but it being found that no faith whatever was to be placed in his promiſes, for that he conſtantly recurred to his old habits, and the propagation of his heretical opinions, he was at length excluded, without hope of return, from every ſort of aſſociation or intercourſe with the faithful. From all this, it is manifeſt, that he felt an unwillingneſs to be divorced from the church, and conſequently could have entertained no thoughts of eſtabliſhing a ſeparate ſect. For ſurely, a man, who on two occaſions exerted himſelf to the utmoſt to obtain re-admiſſion into the church, after having been excommunicated, and with a view thereto twice entered into an engament to amend his opinions and conduct, could have felt no diſpoſition whatever to become the parent of a ſect, but muſt have been anxious to retain his connexion with the faithful. When at length however, his utter expulſion from the church was irrevocably ſealed by a public decree, we find him withdrawing to the iſland of Cyprus, and there laying the foundation of a particular ſect. It was not therefore the diſappointment of his hopes with regard to a biſhopric, but the ſeverity of the Roman church, that made Valentine a ſectary, and led him to ſecede with his diſciples from the regular Chriſtian Fold. I rather ſuſpect then, that Tertullian muſt have blended together two things entirely unconnected with each other, and confounded the cauſe of Valentine's journey to Rome, with the cauſe of his ſeparation from the church. The true hiſtory of the matter, in all probability, is this:—Valentine had been led to cheriſh the expectation of ſucceeding to the biſhopric of ſome church in his native country, Egypt. It was an ancient and eſtabliſhed rule, however, amongſt the Chriſtians, that whenever any perſons coming within the deſcription of confeſſors, were to be met with amongſt the members of a church, they ſhould on a vacancy be promoted to the biſhoprick of ſuch church, in preference to all other, yea, even more learned candidates. A confeſſor, then, probably, preſented himſelf in the church to the preſidency over which Valentine had aſpired, and the hopes

CENT. II. thoſe of the various other Gnoſtic ſects [*k*]; nor did its founder attempt to diſguiſe this, but was well

The Valentinian Æons.

hopes and expectations of the latter, conſequently terminated in grievous diſappointment. Filled with vexation and diſguſt at his want of ſucceſs, he bade adieu to his native country, and travelled to Rome. During his abode in the capital of Italy, ſo far was he from meditating the formation of a ſect, or any thing detrimental to the church, that he rather ſtudied, by means of his eloquence and reputation for learning, to open a way for himſelf to its offices and honours. Finding himſelf, however, here again deceived in his expectations, and the Roman church, having in conſequence of his pertinacity in error, expelled him from her boſom, without hope of return, he withdrew into the iſland of Cyprus, and there became the parent and patron of the ſect which goes under his name.

(*k*) From what ſource the Valentinian religion and philoſophy were derived, has been made the theme of much ingenious diſputation by the learned of modern days, ſince the time that Jo. Franc. Budd us, in his diſſertation *de Hæreſi Valentiniana* annexed to his *Introductio ad Hiſtoriam Philoſophiæ Hebræorum*, pronounced both the one and the other to have originated in the *Cabbala*, or philoſophy of the Hebrews. Ancient authors, for the moſt part, conceived the Valentinian ſyſtem to have been a child of the Platonic ſchool: but if we abſtract from it a few things, which certainly bear an affinity to ſome of the Platonic tenets, the remainder will be found to differ ſo eſſentially from the philoſophy of the ancient academy, that without violence no ſort of reconciliation can be produced between them. Much leſs are thoſe to be attended to, who repreſent Valentine as having endeavoured to imitate and improve upon the *theogonies* and *coſmogonies* of Heſiod and other ancient Grecian, Phœnician, and Egyptian poets. That there is a vaſt difference between thoſe ancient *theogonies* and the Valentinian philoſophy reſpecting the Deity and this world, muſt readily be perceived by any one who will be at the pains of comparing them together. With regard to its having been derived from the *Cabbala*, it muſt certainly be admitted that in the ſyſtem of Valentine, there are ſome things bearing no very diſtant reſemblance to the maxims delivered down by the antient Jewiſh maſters: but at the ſame time there are in it other things

CENT. II.

The Valentinian Æons.

well contented that himſelf and his followers ſhould be ſtyled Gnoſtics. Being endowed by nature, however, with a genius moſt ſurpriſingly prolific, he boldly ventured forth beyond the limits within which the reſt of this tribe had deemed it expedient to confine themſelves, and dilating on ſuch topics as had been previouſly noticed by them merely in a general way, diſtributed them into parts, and, with the aſſiſtance of an inexhauſtible imagination, endeavoured to fill up the intervals in ſuch a way as effectually to meet the numerous difficulties with which he

things in abundance, of a diametrically oppoſite character. Beſides, it is my belief, that for the rudiments of that diſcipline which the doctors of the *Cabbala* profeſs, the Jews were indebted to the oriental philoſophers. Thoſe who coincide with the Engliſh prelate G. Hooper, in referring the Valentinian fictions to an Egyptian origin, find themſelves equally embarraſſed with the reſt, when they come to enter into particulars. In my opinion the claſs to which Valentine ought to be referred is not ſo involved in obſcurity, but that it may be pointed out without any very great difficulty. By all the ancient writers he is reckoned amongſt the Gnoſtics: and his ſyſtem poſſeſſes all thoſe features, by which the Gnoſtic diſcipline is peculiarly characterized, ſuch as a *Pleroma*, *Bythus*, *Æons*, *Sophia*, *Demiurgus*, and the like. Without doubt then the firſt elements of the ſyſtem which he originated were drawn from the oriental philoſophy. To theſe he added not a few conceits of his own, and after a new mode digeſted, expounded, amplified, and brought into connection various things which had been treated of by others, merely in a confuſed, obſcure, brief, and deſultory manner. This could not have proved any difficult taſk, to one whom all writers concur in repreſenting as a man of the moſt fertile imagination and unbounded fancy. In what reſpects however, Valentine was beholden altogether to the Gnoſtic diſcipline, or for what particulars he was indebted principally to his own invention, the Gnoſtic tenets furniſhing him merely with a general outline, it is impoſſible for any one, at this day, to determine with any thing like preciſion.

knew

CENT. II.

The Valentinian Æons.

knew they were beſet [*l*]. Firſt, in the Pleroma, or that immenſe ſpace refulgent with unclouded

[*l*] The difference between Valentine and the various other leaders of Gnoſtic ſects, will be found to conſiſt chiefly in what I am now about to point out. Moſt of the latter appear to have been in the habit of philoſophizing long previous to their embracing Chriſtianity. Their endeavours, therefore, were directed to make the Chriſtian religion accommodate itſelf to the philoſophic ſyſtem of which they approved. With Valentine, on the contrary, a profeſſion of the Chriſtian faith ſeems to have preceded the ſtudy of philoſophy; the conſequence of which was, that in his ſyſtem philoſophy was made wholly ſubſervient to Chriſtianity, and certain parts of the former, which appeared not eaſily to admit of a reconciliation with the principles of the latter, were altogether thrown into the ſhade. The greater part of the words which he makes uſe of in unfolding his opinions are taken from the books of the New Teſtament. This circumſtance, according to my judgment, plainly declares, that theſe books, together with the Chriſtian religion, muſt have been received and approved of by him before he ſet about conſtituting a regular diſcipline of his own. Certainly many of his æons would not have had Chriſtian names given to them, but others of a very different character, had Valentine, previouſly to his embracing Chriſtianity, been in the habit of philoſophizing in the ſame way as the reſt of the Gnoſtics did reſpecting the Deity and the origin of all things. Another argument as to this point is, I think, to be drawn from the reaſons (in themſelves truly ridiculous moſt aſſuredly, and proving to demonſtration the man's extravagance and folly, but nevertheleſs deduced from the books of the New Teſtament) which he adduces in ſupport of various parts of his diſcipline. Being queſtioned, for inſtance, as to how he came to know that there were exactly thirty æons neither more nor leſs, he anſwers that he drew his concluſion as to this from the thirty years of Chriſt's life which were ſuffered to elapſe previouſly to his entering on his miniſtry. Irenæus *contra Hæreſ.* lib. i. c. 1. § 3. p. 7. In the adoption of this number he, with great but very childiſh ſubtlety, attempts ſtill further to juſtify himſelf from our bleſſed Saviour's parable reſpecting the labourers ſent by the houſeholder into the vineyard. Matthew xx. Firſt, he contends that by the hours at which the labourers were hired we ought to underſtand æons; and

clouded light, which the Gnoſtics conſidered as the immediate habitation of the Deity, he placed thirty Æons, or natures of the higheſt dignity, of whom the one half were males, the other females. Theſe again he divided into three orders of different degrees of excellence and

CENT. II.

The Valentinian Eons.

then reckoning up thoſe hours, he, with the utmoſt confidence, aſſerts that nothing whatever can be clearer than that the number of the æons muſt be thirty; for if one, and three, and ſix, and nine, and eleven, be added together, they will be found to yield a total of thirty. What can be more obvious? His duodecad he defends on the ground that Chriſt, when he was twelve years of age, diſputed with the Jewiſh doctors in the temple, and that twelve was the number of our Lord's apoſtles. Irenæus, l. i. c. 3. p. 14. Many arguments of a ſimilar deſcription might, with a very moderate degree of labour, be collected from Irenæus and other writers. Now all theſe things, unleſs I am much miſtaken, obviouſly indicate a man deſirous of adjuſting and determining various philoſophical precepts which he had accidentally picked up, by the teſt of ſcripture, not one labouring to make the principles of Chriſtianity conform to certain rules and maxims of philoſophy in which he had been previouſly grounded. I am induced therefore to believe that Valentine, after embracing the Chriſtian faith, in all its genuine ſimplicity, accidentally fell in with ſome man or other addicted to the Gnoſtic philoſophy, and that, being captivated with its nonſenſical theories, he conceived the reſolution of comparing them with the ſacred writings, expecting that, with the aſſiſtance of ſcripture, he might be able to expound them in a way more accurate and conſentaneous to religion than had hitherto been purſued by the Gnoſtics. The reſult of this undertaking was, that he became the author of a new kind of philoſophical religion, differing, not ſo much in words and terms, as in the diſpoſition and connection of the things themſelves, from others that had preceded it. The terms *Pleroma* and *Æons*, for inſtance, were obviouſly derived from his inſtructor in the Gnoſtic way of philoſophiſing; but in expounding the nature of the former, and determining the number of the latter, he, after conſulting the ſacred writings, ſtruck out into a path entirely his own.

CENT. II.

The Valentinian Æons.

power: an *Ogdoad*, a *Decad*, and a *Duodecad*. The *Ogdoad*, which poſſeſſed in many reſpects a ſuperiority over the reſt, and contained within it the cauſes and reaſons of all things, he repreſented as made up of two *Tetrads*. The firſt of theſe Tetrads he ſtated to conſiſt of the Deity himſelf, whom he termed *Bythus* and *Propator*, and his ſpouſe *Ennoia* (Thought), who was alſo occaſionally ſtyled *Sigè* (Silence), together with their immediate offspring, *Nus* (Mind), and *Aletheia* (Truth). The ſecond, which was ſomewhat inferior in point of dignity to the firſt, he repreſented as being compoſed of *Logos* (the Word), and *Zoë* (Life), *Anthropos* (Man), and *Eccleſia* (the Church). Of theſe latter four, he conceived the firſt two to have been generated of *Nus* and *Aletheia*, and in proceſs of time to have become the parents of the ſecond pair. The *Decad*, which followed next in ſucceſſion to the *Ogdoad*, he conſidered as owing its exiſtence, in the firſt inſtance, to *Logos* and *Zoë*. From theſe ſprung *Bythius* and *Mixis*, who in their turn begat *Ageratos* and *Henoſis*, from the union of whom again were produced *Autophyes* and *Hedone*, of whom were generated *Acinetos* and *Syncraſis*, whoſe offspring, *Monogenes* and *Macaria*, terminate the Decad. For in theſe Æons the generative power was ſuppoſed gradually to diminiſh until it became quite extinct. From *Anthropos* and *Eccleſia*, the other branch of the ſecond Tetrad, ſprung that order or claſs of the celeſtial family to which the title of *Duodecad* was given, in conſequence of its being compoſed of twelve Æons, the one half males, the other females. The firſt two of theſe were *Paracletos* and *Piſtis*, of whoſe offspring, *Patricos* and *Elpis*, were generated *Metricos* and *Agape*. By the union

union of theſe latter again were produced *Ainos* and *Syneſis*, of whom were begotten *Eccleſiaſticos* and *Macariotes*, with whoſe offspring, *Theletos* and *Sophia*, who proved unfruitful, the Duodecad terminates. To theſe thirty Æons were added four others of a ſingular and extraordinary nature, to whom no female aſſociates were aſſigned. Of theſe the firſt, who was ſtyled *Horus*, being placed by his parents *Bythus* and *Sigè*, at the extreme limits of the *Pleroma*, kept a continual guard over its boundaries, and reſtrained the inferior æons, leſt poſſibly being ſtimulated by an ambitious curioſity they might be tempted to overleap their proper barrier, and be ſwallowed up in that immenſe ocean by which the *Pleroma* was ſuppoſed to be ſurrounded. Next after *Horus* came *Chriſtos* (Chriſt), and *Pneuma agion* (the Holy Spirit), two unaſſociated æons, whom *Bythus*, the father of all, through the channel of Monogenes, called into exiſtence for the purpoſe of inſtructing and confining within the line of duty ſuch other æons as might be found wavering, or in any degree diſpoſed to deviate therefrom. The laſt of this numerous ſpiritual family was *Jeſus*, a moſt noble æon, produced by the united act of all the other æons, endowed by them with every gift and faculty of the moſt exalted kind, and conſtantly encompaſſed with a mighty hoſt of angels as a guard. In this long and tireſome fable, it is ſcarcely poſſible to believe that there can be any thing contained at all ſavouring either of wit, wiſdom, or ingenuity: and all the pains which have hitherto been beſtowed in endeavouring to reconcile theſe intricate reveries of a diſordered brain with reaſon and truth, can only be regarded in

CENT. II.

The Valentinian Æons.

CENT. II.

The Valentinian Æons.

the light of ſo much labour entirely thrown away [*m*].

LIV. Theſe

[*m*] Amongſt men diſtinguiſhed for their learning there have not been wanting ſome who, poſſeſſing the rational faculty in an eminent degree themſelves, are unwilling to believe that Valentine could have been wholly deſtitute of it, and have therefore endeavoured to hit upon ſome means or other for interpreting his principles and tenets in ſuch a way as might at leaſt give them the appearance of being partly founded in truth. The ſtrange and unaccuſtomed kind of language, they ſay, to which he had recourſe, threw ſuch a veil of obſcurity over his tenets and doctrine, as the ancient fathers found themſelves utterly unable to penetrate: but only let this veil be removed by a ſkilful and ſagacious hand, and the things themſelves, rather than the repreſentations of thoſe things, be brought under review, and there will appear to be much leſs diſagreement between the Valentinian tenets and opinions and thoſe of the Chriſtians in general, than has been commonly imagined. Vid. Camp. Vitring. *Obſervat. Sacr.* l. i. c. 2. p. 138, & ſeq. *Souverain Platoniſme devoilé*, cap. viii. p. 68. Iſaac de Beauſobre, *Hiſtoire de Manicheé*, v. i. p. 548. 551. 582. 588 & ſeq. Ja. Baſnage, *Hiſtoire des Juifs*, tom. iii. p. 729. and amongſt the firſt, Pet. Faydit *Eclairciſſemens ſur l'Hiſtoire Eccleſ. des deux premieres Siecles*, p. 12. & *Alteration du Dogme Theologique par la Philoſophie d'Ariſtote*, p. 186. 365, & ſeq. where he intimates himſelf to have in contemplation *An Apology for Valentine*. The reader will underſtand me as by no means wiſhing to diſcommend ſuch attempts, which ſeem to ſpeak highly in favour of the ſagacity, equity, and prudence of their authors; neither does the circumſtance of their having been made, occaſion in me any great ſurpriſe. For it cannot be denied but that here and there certain ſparks of the truth appear to gleam forth from amidſt the Valentinian droſs; and we are certain that the early Chriſtian fathers, in numberleſs inſtances, were not ſufficiently on their guard againſt miſtaking and miſrepreſenting the tenets which they undertook to combat. It ſeems to me, however, that I am fully warranted in going the length of ſaying this much, that if Valentine himſelf could ariſe out of his grave he would reject the good offices of theſe his ingenious and erudite defenders. For we have his own confeſſion, that the diſcipline which he taught was altogether at variance with the religion profeſſed

LIV. Theſe Æons, although of divine origin, were

The Valentinian theology.

feſſed by the greater part of the Chriſtians of his day. He alſo denied that his principles and tenets were to be ſupported from the holy Scriptures as they were then read, and as they are read by us at preſent, and boaſted that they were in great meaſure founded on the ſecret communications of Chriſt and his apoſtles, and certain writings of St. Matthias. From all theſe things then it is manifeſt, that it muſt be acting in direct oppoſition to what would be his wiſhes, were he alive, for any one to maintain that the only difference between his tenets and thoſe of his opponents conſiſts merely in words and the manner in which they have been handed down to us. Beſides, amongſt thoſe advocates for Valentine, there is not to be found one who will pretend to deny that in his ſyſtem of diſcipline not a few things preſent themſelves which are altogether inexplicable, and ſome ſo utterly ſtupid and abſurd, as to afford no ground whatever for excuſe. A circumſtance, which, unleſs I am much miſtaken, is of itſelf ſufficient to prove what a waſte of time and pains it is for perſons to employ themſelves in endeavouring to purge ſuch a ſyſtem of its droſs, and give it a new complexion. For we find it confeſſed that the ænigmatical parts preſent an inſurmountable obſtacle to our arriving at any certain concluſion with regard to ſuch parts as are more intelligible; and ſurely the abſurdities with which it abounds, inaſmuch as they leave us in no doubt as to the man's extravagance and folly, muſt be allowed to place it beyond a queſtion that Valentine could not have been ſuch a character as to merit that any wiſe man ſhould become either his defender or apologiſt. How, I would aſk, can that be found or wholeſome which is interwoven and incorporated with what is erroneous and abſurd?—or that be conſentaneous to reaſon which depends on principles and opinions that ſet all reaſon at defiance? By way of illuſtration, let us take, for example, the thirty Æons of the Valentinian ſyſtem, and the mode in which they are connected with each other. Thoſe of the learned who have undertaken to advocate the cauſe of Valentine ſuggeſt, with more or leſs confidence, that by theſe Æons we ought not to underſtand real perſons exiſting ſeparately from the Deity; for that all this hæreſiarch had in view was to diſtinguiſh between certain notions and ideas, by aſſigning to them particular names, and clothing them with the form and character of

CENT. II. were yet ſuppoſed to be liable to the ſame paſſions

The Valentinian theology.

perſons. This celeſtial family of Æons, begotten of the Deity himſelf, is, they ſay, to be regarded in ſomewhat of a metaphyſical light, as exhibiting the ſucceſſion, ſeries, and connection of the virtues and actions of the Supreme Being. For nothing can be more common than for thoſe who would wiſh to ſpeak perſpicuouſly of things altogether abſtracted from ſenſe, to have recourſe to a perſonification of their ideas. But this opinion, although it may for a moment carry with it a ſpecious and impoſing air, will, on examination, be found to have nothing either of weight or probability attached to it. For as Valentine was confeſſedly a Gnoſtic, and the Æons of all the other Gnoſtics were conceived to be not merely feigned or imaginary but real perſons, it is moſt natural to conclude that the Valentinian Æons were regarded as beings of a like deſcription. Again, if we proceed to apply this expoſition to the Valentinian diſcipline, it may indeed be poſſible for us, though not without difficulty, to make it in ſome degree accord with the firſt four pair of Æons; but let us attempt to move one ſtep farther on, and we are immediately encountered by reſiſtance, all the Æons thenceforward, by the actions and affections which are attributed to them, tacitly declaring it to be utterly impoſſible that they could ever have been intended to repreſent notions or ideas of the Divine virtues and actions. (1.) Theſe Æons, as we ſhall preſently ſee, were ſuppoſed to have been filled with envy at the glory with which *Nus*, the moſt exalted of them was inveſted; a circumſtance, as it ſtrikes me, inconteſtibly proving that both he and they could have been conſidered in no other light than as real perſons. For in what way a divine virtue or action could be filled with envy, or ſicken at another's exaltation, is certainly not within the reach of any ordinary degree of comprehenſion. (2.) All theſe Æons were ambitious of mentally comprehending the magnitude of their firſt parent, the Supreme Deity. (3.) An attempt to gratify this inordinate ambition brought the laſt of them, who was inferior to the reſt in point of virtue, into the greateſt peril. (4.) Chriſt and the Holy Spirit were generated of the Deity for the purpoſe of repreſſing, in the other Æons, this moſt dangerous wiſh of attaining to a knowledge of the Divine Nature, and preventing them from yielding to its impulſes. (5.) Edified and invigorated by theſe inſtructors, the

ſions and perturbations of mind as diſtract the CENT. II.

the Æons, who had previouſly occupied themſelves wholly in contemplating the majeſty of the firſt great Parent, directed their attention to a different object, and by an union of their energies produced Jeſus, with a hoſt of angels for his guard, a nature conſtituted, as one may ſay, of the very marrow of all the Æons. (6.) This generation of Jeſus exhauſted, as it were, thoſe powers with which they previouſly ſuperabounded; for they are repreſented as afterwards keeping a due reſtraint on themſelves, and not indulging in their former inordinate deſire of attaining to a comprehenſion of the Deity. (7.) On the borders of the *Pleroma* was placed *Horus*, a moſt powerful Æon, whoſe province it was to take care leſt any of his brethren, under the influence of ſome ſudden impulſe, might be tempted to overleap the boundaries of their celeſtial abode. Now all theſe things are obviouſly of ſuch a nature as to preclude every poſſibility of their being attributed to any other than beings endowed with intellect and will, and exiſting by themſelves really and truly, diſtinct, not only from the Deity, but from each other. Valentine muſt therefore either have been out of his ſenſes, and not have known what he meant himſelf, or he muſt have believed his Æons to have been real perſons, the offspring of the Deity, and have regarded the Pleroma, as he termed it, in the light of a kingdom divided into as many provinces as there were pairs of Æons, each having two rulers peculiar to itſelf, the one a male, the other a female. I can perceive it, however, to be very poſſible that the notion may ſuggeſt itſelf to ſome, and in fact I believe it has ſo ſuggeſted itſelf, that theſe Æons were ſimilar to the *Ideas* which Plato is ſaid to have feigned to himſelf, and which many of his diſciples certainly did feign to themſelves, namely, natures really exiſting in the Deity as living exemplars or images of mundane things. Without doubt Valentine, if reſpect be had to the names of merely ſome of his Æons, may appear to have had ſomewhat of this kind in contemplation; but, when examined throughout, the names of others will be found altogether irreconcileable with this ſuppoſition. Nor does it ſtrike me that his cauſe would derive any conſiderable degree of ſupport from this interpretation, even ſuppoſing it to be in every reſpect well founded; for what are thoſe Platonic *Ideas* but perſons?

The Valentinian theology.

human

CENT. II.

The Valentinian theology.

human race [*n*]. All of them, for inſtance, are repreſented as being filled with envy at the diſtinguiſhed felicity enjoyed by *Nus* the chief ſon of the Deity, who alone was adequate to the full

[*n*] This imperfection in the Æons, or Divine Natures, will excite but little ſurprize if it be conſidered that the Deity himſelf was regarded by all deſcriptions of the Gnoſtics, and particularly by the Valentinians, in a very different light from that in which he was viewed by every other denomination of Chriſtians, and that they did not allow even this firſt great Author of all things to be poſſeſſed of any thing beyond a limited degree of intelligence and power. Moſt aſſuredly the knowledge of the Deity could not, according to them, have been very extenſive, ſince he was incapable of foreſeeing what would be the fate of the Æons generated of himſelf, and took no means to provide for their ſafety and tranquillity until his eyes were opened by the vaſtly perilous attempt of the Æon Sophia. That they believed him to poſſeſs merely a circumſcribed power is equally evident from his being repreſented as unable to prevent the occurrence of many things contrary to his will without the limits of the *Pleroma*, or to obſtruct the inſtitution of a new order of things to the origination of which he could not but have been inimical. The parturition of Sophia, we are told, was unqueſtionably highly diſpleaſing to the Deity. The conſequences of that parturition then, ſuch as the formation of matter, the birth of Demiurgus, the fabrication of the world, and the like, could never have been acceptable in his ſight. Whatever things were done therefore, without the limits of the Pleroma, appear to have been accompliſhed without his approbation, and may, conſequently, be adduced as ſo many proofs of his infirmity or want of power. The Deity of the Gnoſtics was alſo deſtitute of various other qualities, which right reaſon as well as the ſacred writings point out as belonging to the Supreme Being. If ſuch, then, were the ideas entertained by the Valentinians and the whole tribe of the Gnoſtics reſpecting the firſt great Parent of all things, who can feel in any degree ſurpriſed that his offſpring ſhould have been regarded by thoſe pretenders to ſuperior wiſdom as agitated by blind and unruly affections, and pining away under the influence of envy and an inordinate curioſity?

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CENT. II.

The Valentinian theology.

comprehenſion of his father's greatneſs, and all of them deſcribed as animated with the moſt ardent deſire of attaining to a ſimilar degree of knowledge, not one of them believing it beyond the reach of his capacity to arrive at a juſt conception of the tranſcendent majeſty and excellence of the firſt great Parent. Inflamed beyond meaſure with this deſire of fully comprehending the nature of the Supreme Deity, Sophia, or Wiſdom, the youngeſt, and conſequently the weakeſt of the *Æons*, became at length ſo agitated and perturbed, that, had ſhe not been prevented by *Horus*, the guardian of the celeſtial boundaries, ſhe would have overleaped the limits of the Pleroma, and plunged headlong into the vaſt ocean of matter that lay beyond it [*o*]. This violent commotion, however, was productive of an effect which it was utterly out of the power of *Horus* to prevent, namely, that Sophia was delivered of a daughter ſtyled *Achamoth*, who, being expelled from the Pleroma, was immerſed in the rude and chaotic maſs of unformed matter which lay without it. With a view to prevent the other branches of his family from incurring any ſimilar riſk, Bythus, or the Supreme Being, by means of Nus, produced two new *Æons*, *Chriſt* and the *Holy Spirit*; of whom the former had it in command to inſtruct the celeſtial family that the immenſe greatneſs of the Deity

[*o*] In the Greek of Irenæus it is εἰς τὴν ὅλην οὐσίαν, which is rendered by the old Latin tranſlator *in univerſam ſubſtantiam*. But it is evident that this is the ſame as τὴν τῆς ὅλης οὐσίας, *univerſitatis rerum materiam*. Without ſide the Pleroma was ſituated, according to Valentine, the immenſe maſs of matter. He did not, however, as we ſhall preſently ſee, conceive it to be poſſeſſed of either motion, form, or a generative power.

could

CENT. II.

The Valentinian theology.

could be comprehended only by *Nus*, or the Firſt Begotten; whilſt the latter was to exhort and perſuade the Æons to ſubdue, as far as poſſible, every irregular commotion of mind, and to make it their object to celebrate and worſhip their firſt great Parent with a tranquil ſpirit. Calmed and enlightened by the admonitions of theſe inſtructors and guides, the Æons unanimouſly reſolved to give a different direction to their energies, and, uniting together their powers, produced, with the approbation, and in honour of the Supreme Father, the being ſtyled Jeſus, the moſt illuſtrious Star of the Pleroma.

LV. Scarcely were the internal peace and tranquillity of the celeſtial commonwealth thus re-eſtabliſhed, when commotions of the moſt violent kind began to take place without its limits; commotions which eventually occaſioned the formation of this world, and the generation of the human race. *Achamoth*, the daughter of the Æon *Sophia*, upon being expelled from the Pleroma, lay at the firſt in a very miſerable ſtate, being utterly deſtitute of either form, figure, or light. Touched with her calamitous ſituation, Chriſt, who, as we have ſeen, was inveſted with the function of a governor and inſtructor of the Æons in conjunction with the Holy Spirit, imparted to her ſomewhat of form, intelligence, and rationality. Arouſed and ſtimulated by the aſſiſtance thus given her, Achamoth made a nearer advance to the Pleroma, and endeavoured to obtain for herſelf a larger portion of light. In her attempts at this, however, ſhe found herſelf ſedulouſly oppoſed by Horus, the ever-watchful guardian of the borders of the Pleroma; a circumſtance which threw her into the moſt violent perturbations, and

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overwhelmed her, as it were, with apprehenſion and anxiety. At one time, giving way to deſpondency, ſhe would be diſſolved in tears; at another, recollecting the light of which ſhe had obtained a glimpſe, her countenance would be illumined with ſmiles. Theſe different affections had a very wonderful influence on the barren and ſhapeleſs maſs of matter with which ſhe was ſurrounded, and eventually gave birth to the various elements of the univerſe. From the irreſiſtible deſire with which ſhe was inflamed of obtaining further light, aroſe "*The Soul of the World*," "*The Soul of Demiurgus*," and the like; from her anxiety and ſorrow, all other things. All liquid matter had its origin in her tears, all lucid matter in her ſmiles, all the elements of the world in her ſorrows and deſpondency [*p*]. All the component parts of the

CENT. II.

The Valentinian theology.

[*p*] Valentine ſhould ſeem from this to have regarded Achamoth, or, as ſhe was at other times ſtyled, Enthymeſis, as the parent of matter, which, in point of fact, was nothing more or leſs than referring the origin of matter to the Deity himſelf. For Achamoth, the parent of matter, was the daughter of Sophia; and this latter was derived of the Deity, being the laſt of the Æons. Valentine therefore did not aſſert the exiſtence of two eternal principles, the Deity and Matter; but conceived all matter to have been, in point of fact, derived from the Deity, although with the intervention of divers generations. Such is the expoſition that has been given of the tenets of Valentine on this head by ſeveral very eminent ſcholars; and it muſt be confeſſed that in doing ſo they appear to have ſome ſupport from the teſtimony of ancient writers. I cannot, however, ſay that this, by any means, accords with the judgment which I myſelf have been led to form on the ſubject. The doctrine of Valentine, it is my belief, was, that matter had exiſted without the limits of the Pleroma for an infinite period prior to Achamoth's birth, but in a confuſed and unformed ſtate, entirely deſtitute of motion, and every other

CENT. II.

The Valentinian theology.

the world were therefore now ſupplied; but there was ſtill wanting an architect who might reduce them into order, and knit them together in one grand whole. Addreſſing herſelf in ſupplication, therefore, to Chriſt, Achamoth obtained the favour of having Jeſus, or the Saviour, ſent to her, ſurrounded with his hoſt of angels. With this aſſiſtance ſhe produced three ſubſtances, the material, the animal, and the ſpiritual; on one of which, namely, the animal, ſhe

other quality. For, as we have already obſerved juſt above from Irenæus, and could, if it were neceſſary, confirm, by the teſtimony of Tertullian and other ancient writers, Valentine placed without the limits of the Pleroma τὴν ὅλην, or τὴν ὅλην οὐσίαν, *ſubſtantiam univerſam*, or *univerſi*, "the univerſal ſubſtance," or "the ſubſtance of the univerſe." Now by this name no one ſurely will pretend to ſay that he could have meant empty ſpace, for the very name itſelf entirely precludes ſuch a ſuppoſition; and if he did not mean ſpace, it appears to me impoſſible that he could have meant any thing elſe but *matter*. Whatever, therefore, is related by ancient authors reſpecting the offspring born of Achamoth without the limits of the Pleroma, ought to be underſtood as indicating merely thoſe mutations or changes which her perturbations produced in matter which had previouſly lain in a ſtate of abſolute quieſcence and deſtitute of every quality. Her tears did not generate the liquid matter, but merely occaſioned a part of matter, which had previouſly exiſted in a ſolid ſtate, to deliqueſce and ſeparate itſelf from the reſt. Her ſmiles did not produce the pellucid matter, but merely cauſed a portion of matter, which had previouſly been opaque and abſolutely impervious, to become luminous and tranſparent. Her ſorrow did not call into exiſtence air, water, fire, and earth, but merely cauſed ſuch commotions in a part of matter, that all theſe elements were produced from it. In ſhort, Enthymeſis, or Achamoth, might be looked upon, with regard to a few things, as the author of certain modifications, and ſhe might likewiſe be conſidered as having communicated divers qualities to matter in general; but ſhe certainly, in my opinion, could never have been regarded by Valentine as the parent of matter itſelf.

beſtowed

beſtowed the gift of *Form*, a boon rejected by the other two; and hence ſprung *Demiurgus* the Founder and Governor of all things [*q*]. CENT. II

LVI. Demiurgus being thus generated of animal matter, undertook, without delay, the formation of the corporeal univerſe, a work in which he was privately aſſiſted in part by Jeſus, or the Saviour, and in part by his mother Achamoth. The courſe he purſued was, in the firſt place, to ſeparate the animal matter from the material. Of the former, or the animal portion, he then formed certain celeſtial bodies, particularly ſeven heavens, by which, it is eaſy to perceive, were meant ſeven planets or wandering ſtars, which conſtituted places of reſidence for, and were governed by an equal number of the moſt powerful ſpirits or angels [*r*]. The ſupreme heaven Demiurgus reſerved to himſelf, and aſſigned to his mother that ſpace which ſeparates the Pleroma from the world. The material portion, in conſequence of its having originated from a threefold ſource, namely, the apprehenſion, the ſorrow, and the anxiety of Achamoth, was of a threefold nature, and, under the plaſtic hand of Demiurgus, gave The Valentinian tenets reſpecting the creation.

[*q*] This fable is recounted at much greater length by Irenæus, Tertullian, and other ancient writers. To me, however, it appeared unneceſſary to lay before the reader any thing more than a ſketch of its leading features; or, if I may ſo ſpeak, I deemed it ſufficient to exhibit a general view of the different acts without entering into the minutiæ of each ſcene in detail.

[*r*] We may here diſcover evident traces of the nonſenſical dreams of the Egyptians reſpecting ſeven animated planets, or moveable ſtars, poſſeſſing the governance and direction of the corporeal univerſe. The idea was adopted by moſt of the Gnoſtics, eſpecially by ſuch as had received their education in Egypt.

birth

CENT. II.

The Valentinian tenets reſpecting the creation.

birth to three diſtinct genera of things. From that which was the fruit of Achamoth's apprehenſion or fear were produced the various deſcriptions of animals; from the offspring of her ſorrow the evil angels, of whom the principal one, that is, the devil, had his habitation in the air below Demiurgus; and from that which had flowed from her anxiety, the elements of the world, all of which had been tempered with fire. Man was compounded by Demiurgus of both ſubſtances, the material and the animal, and enveloped by him with an external ſenſible body as with a tunic or mantle. To theſe two conſtituent parts of man, a portion of the ſpiritual or celeſtial ſubſtance was added by Achamoth, the mother of Demiurgus, but entirely without the knowledge of her ſon. The outward corporeal frame of each individual man, therefore, was ſaid, by ancient authors, to compriſe, as it were, three men; 1ſt, The material man, who was incapable of ſalvation; 2dly, The animal man, who might be either ſaved or loſt; and, 3dly, The ſpiritual man, who could never periſh, having been generated of the celeſtial or divine ſubſtance [s].

LVII. The

[s] The particulars here ſtated are not, it muſt be confeſſed, handed down to us by ancient writers in a manner ſo determinate, full, and perſpicuous as might be wiſhed. By no one, however, who will be at the pains of comparing with each other, all the different branches of the Valentinian ſyſtem of diſcipline, can any difficulty be experienced in comprehending what it was that theſe authors in reality meant to convey. Man, according to Valentine, was compounded of a twofold body, the one internal, the other external; as likewiſe, of a twofold ſoul. The internal body conſiſted of fluid matter; the external one, which he ſpeaks of as a tunic enveloping the one within, was framed of

LVII. The Founder of the world, having perfected the work which he had undertaken, became

CENT. II.

The Valentinian tenets reſpecting Chriſt.

of matter that had remained denſe and concrete. The latter was perceptible by the ſenſes, the former not. This twofold body Irenæus and other ancient writers denominate *the material man;* but whether in the Valentinian ſenſe, or merely according to their own underſtanding of the matter, I am unable to determine. Diſſolution inevitably awaited this *material man*, or, more properly ſpeaking, this corporeal frame of the man, after which it would be again abſorbed in the grand maſs of matter from whence it had been originally taken. For the Valentinians, like all the other Gnoſtic ſects, were conſtrained by the nature of their principles to deny every poſſibility of a future reſurrection of the body. Of the twofold ſoul poſſeſſed by man, according to the Valentinian theory, the one was taken by Demiurgus from the *animal ſubſtance* or matter, that is, as is ſufficiently evident from the more ſubtile and ethereal ſpecies of matter, or that of which the ſoul of the world was conſtituted and likewiſe the heavens framed. This ſoul is that which contains within it the vital principle, as alſo the faculties of ſenſe and perception, and was by ancient writers termed *the animal man.* The ultimate fate of this ſoul might be either perdition or ſalvation. This is to be underſtood thus: if the ſenſitive ſoul ſhould forſake the worſhip of Demiurgus and his aſſociates, and, turning itſelf to the Supreme Deity, ſhould reſiſt every unlawful appetite, and ſubmit its faculties to the direction of the rational ſoul, which is the ſame thing as placing itſelf under the dominion of right reaſon, it would in time coaleſce, to a certain degree, with the rational or celeſtial ſoul, and in this way obtain for itſelf immortality. Should this ſame ſoul, however, purſue an oppoſite courſe, and, ſpurning at the dominion of the rational ſoul, prefer continuing under the government of the ſenſes, it would, on the diſſolution of the body, return to the ſoul of the world, or that more ſubtile ſpecies of matter from whence it was originally taken. The other ſoul, or that which was conferred upon man by Achamoth, and which ancient writers denominate *the ſpiritual man*, is the rational mind, which, from its very nature is immortal, having been taken from the divine ſubſtance of which the Æons conſiſt. That this ſoul ſhould periſh muſt be impoſſible, ſince it would be the very height of abſurdity to ſuppoſe

CENT. II.

The Valentinian tenets reſpecting Chriſt.

came at length ſo puffed up with arrogance and pride as to imagine that he himſelf was the only true God, and in conſequence thereof to arrogate to himſelf, by the mouths of divers prophets which he diſpatched to the Jewiſh people, the honours due to the Supreme Deity. His example as to this being followed by his aſſociates, the preſidents or rulers of the celeſtial orbs, as well as by the minor angels, who were inveſted with dominion over the different parts of this univerſe, every knowledge of the real and only Supreme God was gradually obliterated from the minds of the human race, the generality of mortals reſigning themſelves wholly to the empire of their luſts, and turning a deaf ear to all

ſuppoſe any part of the divine eſſence obnoxious to decay; wherefore, at ſome time or other, either ſooner or later, it muſt of neceſſity aſcend to the regions above, not indeed to the Pleroma itſelf, where none but natures of the higheſt and moſt perfect order reſide, but to that vaſt region of ſpace inhabited by its mother Achamoth. In theſe his tenets reſpecting man, Valentine differed widely from the reſt of the Gnoſtics, provided the ſentiments of theſe latter have not been curtailed or abridged by ancient authors, but been handed down to us whole and entire. As to the reaſon that induced Achamoth to add to the ſenſitive ſoul another of a better and more noble deſcription, *viz.* a rational one, it appears to me very eaſily to be diſcovered. Achamoth was naturally inclined to favour the ſenſitive ſoul, inaſmuch as it was her own offspring, and conſequently felt deſirous, if by any means the thing could be brought about, to accompliſh its ſalvation. Hence ſhe was induced to give it, for an aſſociate or companion, a particle of the divine eſſence, or a celeſtial ſoul, hoping, that by means of this alliance, the ſenſitive ſoul might be corrected, and, in addition thereto, be imbued with a knowledge of the Supreme Deity. In ſupport and confirmation of this part of his diſcipline, there can be no doubt but that Valentine availed himſelf of all thoſe paſſages that are to be met with in St. Paul's epiſtles reſpecting appetite oppoſing itſelf to reaſon, and the contentions between the fleſh and the ſpirit.

all the ſuggeſtions of reaſon [*t*]. With a view to the extrication of mankind from this deplorable ſtate, Chriſt, who was compounded both of the animal and the ſpiritual ſubſtance, and was furniſhed, moreover, with a ſenſitive body, (compoſed however of ethereal matter,) deſcended from the regions above to this nether world, paſſing through the body of Mary, without contamination, as water does through a conduit. Upon the baptiſm of this celeſtial gueſt by John in the waters of Jordan, Jeſus, an Æon of the higheſt order, deſcended on him in the form of a dove [*u*]. The divine man, thus conſtituted, immediately

CENT. II.

The Valentinian tenets reſpecting Chriſt.

[*t*] Theſe particulars are but very obſcurely handed down by Irenæus and others. By calling in, however, the aſſiſtance of the various other Gnoſtic ſyſtems, and collating the different parts of the Valentinian ſcheme with each other, we have been enabled, as we truſt, to throw ſome little additional light on the ſubject, and to place it in ſuch a point of view as may bring the reader acquainted with the true nature and internal economy of Valentinianiſm in all its branches.

[*u*] As to the opinion entertained by Valentine reſpecting Chriſt, or the Saviour, we are left, by the early Chriſtian writers, as much in the dark as we are with regard to the Valentinian tenets reſpecting man. The Saviour, they ſay, was repreſented by Valentine as conſiſting of four parts: a ſpiritual part, an animal part, a corporeal part, and, finally, a celeſtial part, or the real Saviour, which, aſſuming the form of a dove, deſcended upon Chriſt at his baptiſm. Now to this partition, which, by the bye, I believe not to have originated with Valentine, but to have been purely the invention of Irenæus, it may perhaps be ſcarcely worth the while to take any formal exception; but it is certainly far from being well conceived, and adapts itſelf but aukwardly to the ſubject. The Valentinian Saviour, like the Saviour recognized by all other Chriſtians, was conſtituted of an union of the Son of God with man, but he differed materially from the Saviour of other Chriſtians in this, that he conſiſted of two perſons, of whom the divine one continued with that which was human merely for a few years, in order that the

CENT. II.

immediately commenced, by means of diſcourſes, miracles, and denunciations, a moſt vigorous attack

The Valentinian tenets reſpecting Chriſt.

important legation to mankind might be fulfilled, and took his departure when the latter was about to undergo capital puniſhment. The human perſon, or man, ſhould ſeem to have been looked upon as in a great meaſure reſembling other men; for we find a two-fold ſoul aſcribed to it, the one divine or rational, which is termed by ancient writers the *ſpiritual part of Chriſt*, the other ſenſitive, percipient, the ſeat of appetites and averſions, and which is ſtyled by authors of antiquity the *animal part of Chriſt*. With this two-fold ſoul they likewiſe conjoined a body. In the nature of its body, however, this human perſon differed very conſiderably from other mortals. For, in the firſt place, this its body was not twofold as the bodies of other men were held to be, the one internal and fluid, the other external and denſe or ſolid, but merely a ſingle, uncompounded corporeal frame. Again, this body was not compoſed of terrene matter, but of that which was ſubtile and ethereal, although viſible or perceptible by the ſenſes. For had Chriſt been cloathed with a corporeal frame reſembling ours, it would, according to the Valentinian ſcheme, have been poſſible that, yielding to the contagious influence of the body, he might have inclined to the ſenſitive or concupiſcent ſoul, and ſtirred it up to contend for dominion with the divine or rational ſoul. In that human perſon, or man, with whom Jeſus the Son of God, one of the moſt exalted of the Æons, conſented to unite himſelf, it was but fitting that nothing ſhould be contained which might oppoſe itſelf to right reaſon, but that every motion, every propenſity and deſire ſhould be ſubject entirely to the dictates of the celeſtial mind. Wherefore he was not furniſhed with a terrene body, but adorned with one of pure ætherëal or celeſtial mould. Hence alſo, in the laſt place, this human perſon was of neceſſity held by the Valentinians to have acquired nothing whatever from the Virgin Mary, but to have paſſed through her womb as water through a conduit. For had he adopted any, even the minuteſt particle from the body of Mary, it might, like leaven, have corrupted the whole maſs, and generated in the ſenſitive ſoul, a propenſity inimical to right reaſon; matter being conſidered by the Gnoſtics as the ſource or foundation of all our vices and depraved inclinations. As to the notions entertained by the Valentinians, reſpecting the Son of God; who, for a while, united himſelf

attack on the tyranny of the founder of this world and his aſſociates, whilſt at the ſame time he re-inſtated mankind in the knowledge of the ſupreme Deity, and inſtructed them as to the mode of bringing into ſubjection that foul which is the ſeat of ſenſual appetite and all our irregular deſires. Enraged at theſe proceedings, the Founder of the world cauſed Chriſt to be apprehended and crucified. Previouſly however to his undergoing this puniſhment, not only the Divine Jeſus, the Son of the Deity, but alſo the rational ſoul with which he had been animated, took their departure out of him and fled away. It was his ſenſitive ſoul alone, therefore, that in conjunction with his ætherëal body, was affixed to the croſs. Thoſe mortals, who in obedience to the precepts of Chriſt, ſhould renounce the worſhip of all falſe gods, the God of the Jews not excepted, and con-

CENT. II.

The Valentinian tenets reſpecting Chriſt.

ſelf to this very extraordinary and admirable human perſon, it is not neceſſary that I ſhould ſay much: ſuffice it to obſerve, that although they regarded him as a Being of a very high and excellent nature, their ideas of him fell far ſhort of thoſe which Chriſtians in general entertain of the Son of God. They conſider him, it is true, as an Æon of the moſt exalted rank, begotten of the eſſence of the Deity, but neither in nature, degree, or power, is he placed by them on an equal footing with the father. From the particulars which I have thus enumerated, it muſt, I think, be ſtrikingly apparent, how widely the Valentinian tenets, reſpecting the perſon of Chriſt, differ from ours. Upon the ſeizure and condemnation of Chriſt by the Jews, the Valentinians held, that not only the ſon of the Deity, or that Æon which had reſided within him, took his departure, but alſo one of the ſouls by which he had been animated, namely, the rational or celeſtial one. It was the ſenſitive ſoul alone, they believed, that in conjunction with the etherëal body was affixed to the croſs. From this, however, it is apparent, that the Valentinians muſt have conceived Chriſt to have actually ſuffered and died.

CENT. II.

The Valentinian tenets reſpecting Chriſt.

fining their adoration to the Supreme Father alone, ſhould make the ſenſitive and concupiſcent ſoul ſubmit itſelf to the caſtigation and emendatory diſcipline of right reaſon, would obtain ſalvation for their ſouls of both deſcriptions, which, on the diſſolution of the body, would be tranſferred to the regions of unbounded ſpace adjoining the Pleroma, and there be made partakers of everlaſting joy and felicity. The ſenſitive ſouls of thoſe on the contrary, who ſhould purſue an oppoſite courſe, and ſpurning at the controul of the rational ſoul, ſhould perſevere in upholding the cauſe of ſuperſtition, had no proſpect whatever held out to them, but that of everlaſting perdition [*v*]. When all thoſe parts of the Divine nature, conſtituting what were termed celeſtial ſouls, ſhould be delivered from the bondage of matter, and cleanſed from

[*v*] Great as was the difference of opinion between the Valentinians and other Chriſtians with regard to the perſon of Chriſt, it was equalled by their diſcrepance in ſentiment reſpecting his function, and the cauſe for which he died. For Valentine did not believe that the ſins of mankind had been expiated by the ſufferings and death of Chriſt; neither did he believe that the Son of God, or even the rational ſoul of the man Chriſt, had been at all affected by ſuch ſufferings and death. According to him the only purpoſe for which the glorious Æon, termed Jeſus, came into the world, was that he might offer terms of ſalvation to thoſe ſouls in which is ſeated the faculty of ſenſe and volition. The terms were that they ſhould forſake the worſhip of all falſe gods, the God of the Jews, or founder of the world, not excepted, and devoting themſelves to the Supreme and only true God, render, according to the example of Chriſt, all their propenſities and deſires ſubject to the controul of the rational or celeſtial mind. All that the Valentinians therefore aſcribe to Chriſt, was his having communicated a knowledge of the true God to our benighted race, and taught by his precepts and example, that our deſires were to be placed under the dominion of reaſon.

all

CENT. II.

The Valentinian tenets reſpecting Chriſt.

all impurity, Achamoth would, it was aſſerted, paſs into the Pleroma, and there be united with Jeſus as with a huſband; whilſt Demiurgus would proceed to take up his abode in thoſe regions of ſpace contiguous to the Pleroma, which had previouſly been the habitation of his mother. The ſpiritual or celeſtial ſouls, at the ſame time taking leave of the ſenſitive ſouls, their former companions, would, in like manner, aſcend into the Pleroma, and for the future be aſſociated with the angels: whilſt the ſenſitive ſouls, or thoſe of inferior order, would continue to experience the higheſt degree of felicity in the region without the Pleroma, under the dominion of Demiurgus. Finally, the fire that had been originally diſtributed throughout every part of the univerſe, would burſt forth from its concealment, and involving the whole machine of the world in flame, produce its utter deſtruction [*w*]. That

[*w*] The Valentinian fable in its termination correſponds exactly with that of the Manichæans. A perfect agreement between them is alſo diſcoverable in not a few other particulars. This one circumſtance alone is ſufficient to place it beyond all controverſy that the Gnoſtic diſcipline was, in a great meaſure, derived from the tenets of the oriental philoſophers reſpecting the origin of evil. By not only Valentine, however, but others of the Gnoſtics, there was blended with thoſe oriental maxims, no ſmall portion of the idle conceits and phyſical opinions of the Egyptians. The general tendency of the Oriental, the Gnoſtic, and the Manichæan ſchemes is to inculcate, that this world was framed out of rude and vitiated matter, without the knowledge or conſent of the Supreme Deity, and that either through accident or deſign, no inconſiderable portion of the divine or celeſtial ſubſtance was incorporated therewith. That the Deity is conſtantly endeavouring, by the aſſiſtance of right reaſon gradually to detach this portion of himſelf, or of the divine ſubſtance, and more particularly ſuch part of it as is impriſoned within the bodies of the human race, from depraved matter, and once more to reſtore it to its origin in the realms of light. During the time neceſſarily required for the ac-

CENT. The Valentinian tenets reſpecting Chriſt.

That Valentine ſhould have encouraged, or even countenanced in his followers any thing like moral depravity, or a ſinful and flagitious courſe of life, is altogether impoſſible; ſince his injunctions were that the inferior ſoul of man ſhould always be made to yield obedience to the one that was ſuperior, or in other words to right reaſon. We, at the ſame time, however, feel no difficulty whatever in ſo far giving credit to Irenæus, and other ancient writers, as to believe that certain of his diſciples and followers might have led a very diſgraceful courſe of life, and endeavoured, by a perverſion of the precepts of their maſter, to ſupply themſelves with an excuſe for plunging into vice and every ſpecies of iniquity [*x*].

LVIII. From

compliſhment of this object, he patiently tolerates the exiſtence of this univerſe, or machine of the world, and may even be ſaid, in a certain degree, to employ his power in upholding it. For ſuch is the nature of its conſtruction, that it nouriſhes within its boſom the ſeeds of its own deſtruction, *i.e.* an active and vigorous combuſtible principle, diffuſed throughout its whole frame, and which, unleſs it were kept in ſubjection by the Deity, would ſoon put an end to the world and every thing belonging to it. When all the ſouls of men, however, and every particle of the divine eſſence, ſhall have obtained a deliverance from matter, the Deity will no longer prevent this ſlumbering fire from burſting forth, but ſuffer it to iſſue from its caverns and receſſes, and involve the whole corporeal univerſe in flames and deſtruction. This doctrine may have been exhibited by different ſects under a variety of forms, ſome more ſubtile, others more homely and groſs, ſome again more ſimple, others more refined and ingenious; but the ſum and ſubſtance of the matter itſelf will be found to be in all the ſame.

[*x*] Much has been handed down to us by Irenæus, lib. i. c. vi. and much by other ancient authors reſpecting the wickedneſs and crimes of the Valentinians; whom they repreſent as having maintained that every thing was lawful for them, inaſmuch as they had attained to the higheſt degree

LVIII. From the Valentinian ſchool are ſaid to have iſſued not a few founders of other ſects, who, CENT. II.

Inferior ſects that owed their origin to the Valentinian ſchool.

gree of divine knowledge; and as having freely indulged in the violation of every law divine as well as human. By no ancient writer, however, is Valentine himſelf charged with any thing of this kind, nor do we any where find a depravity of morals attributed to the ſect at large. The accuſation of Irenæus extends merely to certain of the Valentinians. Hence, I think it is evident, that Valentine could not have countenanced his diſciples in a vicious courſe of life; but that certain of his followers, by giving a different interpretation to the precepts of their maſter from what he ever intended, endeavoured to make them a cloak for their iniquities. This might very eaſily occur. As it was the opinion of many of the Chriſtians, that let a man only be poſſeſſed of faith and he might ſin as much as he liked, ſo is it highly credible that certain of the Valentinians might maintain that when once a perſon had abſtracted the ſoul from the body, and attained to that intimate knowledge of the true God, which they ſtyled γνωσις, he could in no ſhape whatever be affected by the actions of the body. Into this grievous error they were indeed the more likely to fall, from their diſbelief of the future reſurrection of men's bodies. The Valentinian diſcipline itſelf, ſo far from countenancing men in a ſinful wicked courſe of life, expreſsly inculcated that the way to eternal happineſs lay open only to thoſe ſouls who, after the example of Chriſt, ſhould render all their propenſities and deſires ſubject to the celeſtial and imperiſhable ſoul; or, in other words, to right reaſon. Irenæus, and others who have written after him, I know very well, relate that Valentine recogniſed three deſcriptions or claſſes of men; σωματικοι or the corporeal; ψυχικοι, or the animal; and πνευματικοι, or the ſpiritual. The *corporeal* men, are the heathen, or the worſhippers of falſe gods; the *ſpiritual* men, the Valentinians or Gnoſtics; and the *animal* men, all other Chriſtians. Of theſe, the firſt muſt of neceſſity periſh; the ſecond, by an equal neceſſity, muſt be ſaved; the laſt are capable of being either ſaved or involved in perdition. That the ſpiritual men ſhould buſy themſelves at all as to good works is perfectly unneceſſary; ſince it is impoſſible that they ſhould periſh. The animal men are under the neceſſity of cultivating piety. The corporeal men, inaſmuch as they are entirely deſtitute of hope, may conſider themſelves as abſolved from every law. Now if

CENT. II.

who, retaining the fundamental principles of their maſter's diſcipline, endeavoured, either by certain partial

Inferior ſects that owed their origin to the Valentinian ſchool.

ſuch had been the doctrine taught by Valentine, it would certainly have been holding out an invitation to the greater part of the human race to indulge in every ſpecies of iniquity, and granting to his followers, in particular, the licence of doing whatever they might liſt. But the tenets which we thus find aſcribed to Valentine by Irenæus and other ancient writers, are manifeſtly repugnant to various parts of the Valentinian diſcipline: and it is moreover certain that Valentine conſidered all men to be by nature equal; all endowed with a two-fold ſoul; and the gate of ſalvation as irrevocably cloſed againſt none. I therefore entertain not the leaſt doubt but that theſe ancient authors underſtood his ſentiments but very imperfectly, or elſe were, on ſome account or other, induced deſignedly to miſrepreſent them. That mankind were diſtributed by Valentine into three claſſes, the animal, the ſpiritual, and the corporeal, is what I by no means pretend to queſtion; but he certainly never did think, nor was it poſſible he ſhould think, that the corporeal claſs were deſtitute of ſouls, and, of neceſſity doomed to perdition. What he meant to ſay was doubtleſs this, that amongſt men of the corporeal claſs, or the worſhippers of falſe gods, the body commonly uſurps the dominion, and ſtifles every energy and power of the ſoul. As long then as they ſhould continue in that ſtate, nothing was to be hoped for by them, upon the diſſolution of the body; for if they died under ſuch circumſtances, the ſenſitive ſoul would periſh, and the rational one, being incapable of death, would be transferred into another corporeal frame. After a ſimilar manner ought we to underſtand what he ſays of men of the animal claſs. For his doctrine was, not that theſe were deſtitute of a rational ſoul, but that the ſenſitive and concupiſcent ſoul had in them obtained the maſtery ſo as to prevent the celeſtial ſoul from executing its office. They were therefore, according to him, nearer to ſalvation than thoſe of the corporeal claſs, who referred every thing to the body, and totally neglected the ſoul. The claſs to which he gave the title of ſpiritual, conſiſted of thoſe in whom that particle of the divine eſſence, the celeſtial mind, the ſeat of reaſon and of wiſdom, enjoys the pre-eminence, and holds in ſubjection, not only the body, but alſo that other ſoul by which the body is acted upon and influenced. Theſe muſt, of neceſſity, be ſaved, inaſmuch

partial emendations, or by a new expoſition and arrangement, to improve upon the original plan, and communicate to it a more ſpecious and impoſing air. It ſhould ſeem, however, not at all unlikely that the ſame thing which occurred in

CENT. II.

Inferior ſects that owed their origin to the Valentinian ſchool.

aſmuch as they reſemble Chriſt, and conduct themſelves agreeably to his example. I have been obliged to ſpeak the leſs diſtinctly reſpecting the difference in the two-fold ſoul with which Valentine conſidered man as having been endowed, in conſequence of ancient authors having omitted to mark this difference with ſufficient preciſion. This much however, is clearly to be perceived, that one was conſidered as being, by nature, immortal; the other as not being immortal by nature, but capable of becoming ſo upon yielding due obedience to the ſuperior ſoul. It is alſo apparent that the former was looked upon as formed of the divine ſubſtance, or that whereof the Deity himſelf conſiſts; the latter as conſtituted of the more noble part of matter, or ſuch as was made uſe of in the framing of the heavens. We are not however able to ſpeak with equal confidence, as to the nature or extent of the virtues or powers which each was ſuppoſed to poſſeſs. Valentine, it is true, repreſents the ſuperior ſoul, as the immediate ſeat or reſidence of rationality and wiſdom: but at the ſame time he places a certain ſort of reaſon alſo in the inferior ſoul. For he enjoins this latter to attend to the dictates and direction of the ſuperior ſoul, a thing, that without reaſon and intelligence it muſt have been utterly incapable of doing. It had alſo the power of either obeying or reſiſting the ſuperior ſoul; and muſt conſequently, in addition to reaſon, have been endowed with liberty or freedom of will, a thing not poſſeſſed by the ſuperior ſoul. Theſe, as well as various other particulars of the Valentinian diſcipline, admit not in the preſent day, of an explication altogether ſatisfactory, inaſmuch as ancient writers are ſilent as to many things of eſſential importance to a right underſtanding of the ſubject, whilſt they, at the ſame time pervert other things, and not unfrequently give us as the genuine tenets of Valentine, what are merely inferences or deductions drawn by themſelves. Finally, in their account of this man's doctrines and opinions, every thing like method or order, is beyond all meaſure diſregarded; and various things which ought to have been aſſociated together and brought into one view, are diſunited and kept far apart.

the

CENT. II.

Inferior ſects that owed their origin to the Valentinian ſchool.

the caſe of Simon Magus, again took place with regard to Valentine; namely, that every one who profeſſed ſentiments, bearing the leaſt affinity or reſemblance to his opinions, was at once, without farther evidence, accounted to be of the number of his diſciples. Amongſt thoſe who are thus reported to have derived the firſt rudiments of their diſcipline from Valentine, we may firſt notice Ptolemy, the founder of the ſect of the Ptolemaites, a man of ingenuity and eloquence, who differed widely from the general body of the Valentinians in his tenets reſpecting the Æons, as well as in regard to ſome other points. His Æons are not only differently named and arranged from thoſe of his reputed preceptor, but he appears likewiſe to have conſidered them merely in the light of divine attributes or virtues [*y*]. Far different were the ſentiments of Secundus, who is commemorated by Irenæus as a

[*y*] Reſpecting Ptolemy, in addition to Irenæus, Tertullian, (*Lib. contr. Valent. c.* iv. *p.* 290.) Auguſtine and others, I would recommend the reader particularly to conſult Epiphanius, *Hæreſ.* XXXIII. p. 216. 222., who gives us a letter of his to a woman named Flora, which was afterwards publiſhed more correctly by J. Erneſt. Grabe, in his *Spicilegium Patrum et Hæreticorum*, tom. ii. p. 69. In this letter he communicates, without reſerve, his ſentiments reſpecting the law of Moſes, declaring it, in his opinion, not to have been derived from the Supreme Deity; but to have been framed in part by the Jewiſh doctors, in part by Moſes, and in part by Demiurgus, or the founder of this world. This opinion reſpecting the origin of the law of Moſes, it has not been unuſual for learned men to conſider as peculiar to Ptolemy; but as to this, they are unqueſtionably in an error. That the Jewiſh law did not owe its origin to the Supreme Being, was an article of common belief throughout the whole Gnoſtic ſchool, although the leaders of the different ſects into which it branched might differ ſomewhat in the mode of expreſſing their ſentiments on the ſubject. Even Valentine himſelf did not think otherwiſe.

every

CENT. II.

very diſtinguiſhed diſciple of the Valentinian ſchool. According to him the Æons were real ſubſtances or perſons, and what is particularly deſerving of remark, he placed at the head of them two principles, light and darkneſs; a circumſtance which plainly proves him to have borrowed more from the Oriental philoſophy than his maſter had done, and alſo indicates in him ſomewhat of an inclination to the diſcipline of the Manichees [z]. A third diſciple of the Valentinian ſchool, not at all inferior to theſe in point of fame, indeed, rather their ſuperior, was Heracleon, an author whom we find Clement of Alexandria and Origen repeatedly citing, for the purpoſe of expoſing and confuting his errors. Whether Heracleon diſſented in reality from Valentine, or merely in words and phraſes, and if there was really a difference between them, in what ſuch difference conſiſted, and what were the peculiar opinions or tenets of the former, are points, which, in the preſent day, it will be found far from eaſy to determine [a].

Inferior ſects that owed their origin to the Valentinian ſchool.

[z] Vid. Irenæus, lib. i. cap. xi. Epiphanius, *Hæreſ.* xxxi. Auguſtin. *de Hæreſ.* cap. xii. It is certain that much difference of opinion ſubſiſted between Ptolemy and Secundus, as to the nature of the Æons; the one conſidering them as merely modes or virtues of the Divine nature, the other as real ſubſtances or perſons; and each contending that his own ſentiments on the ſubject correſponded with thoſe which had been entertained by their maſter. Reſpecting the nature and true grounds of this diſpute, one might readily engage in much learned diſquiſition; but as there is no neceſſity for it, I ſhall content myſelf merely with obſerving, that from this controverſy, Valentine appears to have been a man of ſome genius certainly; but at the ſame time one of a weak indeciſive mind, who indeed propounded many new opinions, but left the greater part of them ſo ill defined, as to afford matter for continual diſputes amongſt his diſciples.

[a] Vid. J. Erneſt. Grabe. *Spicileg. Patrum et Hæreticor.* tom. ii. p. 82. & ſeq.

CENT. II.

Marcus and Colarbaſus.

LIX. Amongſt the diſciples of Valentine we find ancient authors agree alſo in reckoning (though on what authority is uncertain) one Marcus, the founder of the ſect of the Marcoſians, and a Colarbaſus, who was ſome how or other connected with this Marcus, either as an aſſociate, a pupil, or a preceptor. Of Colarbaſus not much is handed down to us by either Irenæus or any other writer. What little they do ſay of him almoſt entirely reſpects his tenets concerning the Æons, whom, it appears, he diſtributed, named, and aſſociated in a very different way from Valentine. To enter further, therefore, into the hiſtory of this man's opinions would be only a waſte of words. Concerning Marcus, however, many things are left us on record, particularly by Irenæus. Of theſe ſome may eaſily be reconciled with the principles of the Valentinian diſcipline, but others are entirely new, and, at the ſame time, exceedingly obſcure, ſo much ſo indeed as ſcarcely to admit of explication.

Among other notable attainments and exploits he is ſaid to have diſcovered very profound myſteries in the Greek letters, to have ſtudied magic, worked miracles by the aſſiſtance of demons, debauched women, inſtilled into his followers the vileſt of principles, and compiled a code of the moſt puerile and abſurd inſtitutions. In the heavy catalogue of accuſations thus brought againſt him, ſome particulars were no doubt well founded, others wholly fictitious, and ſome deduced from a miſapprehenſion, or a wrong interpretation of his opinions. To draw the proper line of diſtinction between the one and the other of theſe, might not perhaps be altogether beyond the power of a perſon intimately converſant with

with the Gnoſtic diſcipline; but it would be a work replete with labour and fatigue. Contemplating the hiſtory of this man with every poſſible degree of candour, and even rejecting, as ſpurious, every part of what are ſtated to have been the Marcoſian tenets, except ſuch things as could not poſſibly have been feigned, it will nevertheleſs be found impoſſible to form a more lenient judgment of Marcus than this: That he was a man of the Jewiſh perſuaſion, in all probability neither wicked nor impious; but, at the ſame time, one who exerciſed his mental powers only to make himſelf ridiculous, and who, having his brain bewildered with Oriental, Egyptian, and Jewiſh extravagancies, converted the univerſal religion, which he pretended to profeſs, into a ſyſtem of the moſt egregious nonſenſe and deformity [*b*].

CENT. II.

Marcus and Colarbaſus.

LX. Ancient

[*b*] Reſpecting the tenets of Marcus, and the ſect of the Marcoſians founded by him, which, extending itſelf through various regions, particularly Gaul, impoſed on many of the more plain and ſimple of the Chriſtians, Irenæus treats much at large, (*Adv. Hæreſ.* lib. i. cap. xiv. & ſeq.) although in a very immethodical, unconnected manner. The ſubject has alſo been taken up after him by others. Of theſe tenets we need only direct our attention to ſuch as it was utterly impoſſible that either Irenæus or any other writer ſhould have feigned, to be convinced that the man muſt have been diſordered in his brain, indeed entirely out of his wits. The evidence of this is, in fact, ſo glaringly obvious, that we can only wonder it ſhould ever have entered into the heads of learned men to exerciſe their genius in endeavours to reclaim and purify ſo incorrigible and hopeleſs a ſubject. By way of ſpecimen, we will preſent the reader with the Marcoſian tenets reſpecting the force and power of the Greek letters, as they are given us by Irenæus, nearly in the very words of Marcus himſelf. ταῦτ' ἂν (the reader will underſtand that theſe are the words of one of the Supreme Æons whom Marcus repreſents as having been ſent to him in the form of a woman) ταῦτ' ἂν

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CENT. II.

Bardeſanes.

LX. Ancient writers are alſo agreed in reckoning, as the diſciples of Valentine (in addition

τὰ παρ' ὑμῖν εἴκοσι τέσσαρα γράμματα ἀπορρόιας ὑπάρχειν γίνωσκε των τριῶν δυνάμεων εἰκονικάς, των περιεχουσῶν τον ὅλον των ἄνω στοιχείων τον ἀριθμόν· τὰ μὲν γαρ ἄφωνα γράμματα ἐννέα νόμισον εἶναι τε πατρὸς καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας, διὰ τὸ ἀφώνους αὐτοὺς εἶναι, τετέχειν ἀῤῥήτως καὶ ἀνεκλαλήτως· τὰ δὲ ἡμίφωνα ὀκτὼ, ὄντα τε λόγου καὶ τῆς ζωῆς, διὰ τὸ μέσα ὥσπερ ὑπάρχειν των τε ἀφώνων καὶ των φωνηέντων· καὶ ἀναδέχεσθαι των μεν ὑπερθεν την ἀπόῤῥοιαν, των δ' ὑπὲρ αὐτὴν την ἀναφοράν· τὰ δὲ φωνήεντα καὶ αὐτὰ ἑπτὰ ὄντα τε ανθρώπου καὶ της ἐκκλησίας, ἐπὶ διὰ του ἀνθρώπου φωνὴ προελθοῦσα ἐμόρφωσε τὰ ὅλα. ὁ γὰρ ἦχος της φωνῆς μορφὴν αὐτοῖς περιεποίησεν. *Has igitur quæ apud nos ſunt viginti quatuor litteræ, emanationes eſſe intellige trium virtutum imaginales, earum quæ continent univerſum, quæ ſunt ſurſum elementorum numerum. Mutas enim litteras novem puta eſſe patris et veritatis, quoniam ſine vòce ſint, id eſt, inenarrabiles et ineloquibiles. Semivocales autem cum ſint octo, Logi eſſe et Zoës, quoniam quaſi mediæ ſint inter mutas et vocales, et recipere eorum quidem quæ ſuperſint emanationem, eorum vero quæ ſubſint elevationem. Vocales autem et ipſas ſeptem eſſe, anthropi et eccleſiæ, quoniam per anthropum vox progrediens formavit omnia. Sonus enim vocis formam eis circumdedit.* Irenæus, lib. i. cap. xiv. § 5. p. 70. Communications, ſimilarly ſubtile, and even ſtill more ridiculous and obſcure, reſpecting the force and properties of the Greek letters, and their accordance with divine matters, both precede and follow the above. That it ſhould ever have entered into the mind of Irenæus or any other perſon to have invented things like theſe, and aſcribed them to Marcus, by way of bringing him into diſcredit, is not to be believed. They are, in fact, taken from his writings, and given in his own words. Now, can any one, let me aſk, who is himſelf in poſſeſſion of his ſenſes, for a moment regard theſe ſublime myſteries as the offspring of a ſound and rational mind? But I will add another ſpecimen, which muſt, I think, place it beyond all queſtion, that Marcus and his followers altogether turned their backs on every principle of true wiſdom, and were devoted to the ſilly conceits and extravagancies of the Egyptians. In Irenæus are to be found certain prayers, which the Marcoſians dictated to dying people, to be recited when, in their journey to the celeſtial regions, they came to paſs through the provinces of Demiurgus and his aſſociates. Iren. lib. i. cap. xxi. § 3. p. 97. In theſe prayers alſo, there is no room to ſuſpect any thing like fraud

dition to others whom we deem it unnecessary to notice, inasmuch as they are scarcely known, even

Bardesanes.

fraud or misapprehension. If the sense or meaning of them be attended to, they will be found to have a near resemblance to those of a similar kind in use with the Ophites, which are preserved by Origen in his work *contra celsum*, although they certainly differ from them somewhat in words. They are, moreover, of such a description as to preclude every idea of their having been invented by any adversary of the Marcosian sect. It was the opinion, then, of the Marcosians, as well as of the Ophites and others of the Gnostics, and derived by them, as I conceive, from the Egyptians, that the souls of the good and virtuous, upon taking leave of the body, and proceeding to the mansions above, had to pass through the celestial orbs, and the planets or wandering stars, which were under the dominion of Demiurgus and other most powerful Genii, who were completely adverse to this passage of souls through their domains, and particularly anxious to arrest their progress. The efforts of these invidious tyrants, however, might, it was believed, by means of certain words and phrases, be so far rendered abortive as to prevent their impeding souls in their ascent to the Deity; and it was of course considered as expedient that dying persons should provide themselves with prayers and formulæ of this description: τὰυτα δὲ τὰς περὶ τον Δημιουργὸν ἀκούσαντας, (we give the words of Irenæus) σφόδρα ταραχθῆναι, καὶ καταγνῶναι αὐτῶν της ῥίζης, καὶ τους γένους της μητρός· αὐτὸν δὲ πορευθῆναι εἰς τὰ ἴδια ῥίψαντα τον δεσμὸν αυτου, τυτέστι την ψυχην· *Hæc autem eos qui circa Demiurgum sunt audientes, valde conturbari, et reprehendere suam radicem, et genus matris: ipsos autem* (the souls which had taken their leave of the body), *abire in sua, projicientes nodos ipsorum, id est, animam*, meaning the sensitive soul itself, or what of the sensitive soul these celestial souls might have brought with them from the body. For any one to attempt to explain away the utter inanity and absurdity of things like these, apears to me a most miserable abuse both of learning and talents. I would not, however, be understood as denying that some things with which the Marcosian sect is reproached by Irenæus and others, might either be misunderstood by ignorant people unacquainted with the force of the words and terms made use of, or unfairly represented by heedless and malevolent spectators, to whom every thing appeared vile and flagitious that was unusual with the Christians; amongst which I reckon

CENT. II. even by name at this day), thoſe two very celebrated characters, Bardeſanes and Tatian, from both

Bardeſanes.

I reckon what is reported reſpecting the ſorcery and deluſive tricks, or if the reader had rather, the religious fallacies of Marcus, which appearto me unworthy of the leaſt credit, inaſmuch as it is to be ſupported by no kind of argument, and may be invalidated on ſeveral grounds. Whatever Irenæus has tranſmitted to us reſpecting things of this ſort, appears to have been collected from the teſtimony of certain women, who might have eaſily been impoſed upon, and under the hope of obtaining for themſelves a more ready re-admiſſion into the congregation of the faithful, whom for a while they had deſerted, might poſſibly have been induced to embelliſh their narration in a way not exactly correſponding with the truth. It is ſaid, for example, that in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, Marcus was accuſtomed, either by means of magic or ſome ſort of juggling, to tinge the wine in the chalice with a red or purple colour. ποτηρια οἴνω κεκραμένα (ſays Irenæus, lib. i. cap. xiii. p. 60.) προσποιουμενος εὐχαριστεῖν, καὶ ἐπὶ πλέον ἐκτείνων τον λόγον της ἐπικλήσεως, πορφύρεα καὶ ἐρυθρὰ ἀναφαίνεσθαι ποιεῖ· ὡς δοκεῖν τον απο των ὑπὲρ τὰ ὅλα χαρὶν το αἷμα το ἑαυτῆς ῥάζειν ἐν τω ἐκείνω ποτηρίω διὰ τῆς ἐπικλήσεως αυτου. *Pro calice vino miſto, fingens ſe gratias agere, & multum producens verba invocationis purpureus & rubicundus calix ut appareat facit, ita ut videatur gratia ab iis qui ſunt ſupra omnia* (*i. e.* the Æons) *ſanguinem ſuum in illius calicem per ejus invocationem ſtillare.* Now with regard to this, learned men have denied, and as I think, rightly, that for the accompliſhment of a thing of this ſort any recourſe to magic could be neceſſary. They ſuſpect nevertheleſs, that Marcus muſt in ſome way or other have deluded the eyes of the beholders. But, for my own part, I have not the leaſt doubt but that in this caſe a very innocent practice, and one that originated from a good deſign, has been expoſed to unmerited reproach through the miſtake of ſome ſpectator who was unacquainted with the Marcoſian diſcipline. The cuſtom with this ſect no doubt was, that the chalice ſhould be filled firſt with white wine, probably by way of repreſenting, by a ſort of figure, the purity and ſanctity of Chriſt's blood. In the act of conſecration, however, it was the uſage for the prieſt to mingle a portion of red wine with the white, ſo as to make the contents of the chalice in ſome ſort reſemble blood, and thereby excite in the minds of thoſe preſent,

both of whom the cauſe of Chriſtianity derived no inconſiderable degree of benefit, although each

Bardeſanes.

preſent, a more lively recollection of the Redeemer's ſacrifice. Poſſibly it might happen, that this mingling of the red wine with the white by the prieſt, might eſcape the obſervation of certain perſons who chanced to be occaſional witneſſes of the public worſhip of the Marcoſians, and that upon perceiving red wine diſtributed in the cup, without being aware that any other than white wine had been poured into it, they were led to conclude that this change muſt have been wrought by the aſſiſtance of ſome evil ſpirit, and to repreſent the matter in this light to others. Who is there that can be ignorant of the multitude of errors to which miſtakes of this kind give riſe? My opinion is preciſely the ſame with regard to the other miracle which is ſubſequently related by Irenæus. On the table, around which it was cuſtomary for the Marcoſians to aſſemble when celebrating the Lord's ſupper, was placed a cup of a much larger ſize than the chalice out of which the communicants drank. Into this larger cup it was the uſage for the prieſt to pour what little portion of the wine might be left by the communicants in the chalice, or ſmaller cup; and the conſequence, we are told, was, that theſe few drops became on a ſudden ſo amplified as to fill ſuch larger veſſel, even to overflowing, with liquor of an enſanguined colour. Irenæus recounts this as one of the prodigies, or if the reader had rather, one of the frauds of Marcus; for I muſt own that his words admit of being taken in either ſenſe: καὶ τοιαῦτά τινα εἰπὼν, καὶ ἐξοιςρήσας τον ταλαίπωρον θαυματοποιὸς ἀνεφάνη, τῳ μεγάλῳ πληρωθέντος ἐκ τῳ μικρῷ ποτηρίῳ ὥστε καὶ ὑπερεκχεῖσθαι ἐξ ἀυτῳ. *Dein cum talia quædam dixit, et infelicem illam (mulierem) ad inſaniam adegit, tum mirabilia facere videtur, majore calice minore ita ut (poculum) redundaret impleto.* But it is eaſily to be collected, even from the words of Irenæus himſelf, by any one who ſhall duly attend to them, although it muſt be acknowledged that his manner of expreſſing himſelf in this paſſage is very confuſed and obſcure, that no trick or deception was actually practiſed in this caſe, and that the idea of the thing's having been accompliſhed by any fraudulent or preternatural operation in all probability originated with certain ignorant or heedleſs and prejudiced ſpectators. With the Marcoſians it was not the cuſtom for ſeveral to partake in ſucceſſion of one cup, as is the practice with other Chriſtians, but a ſeparate portion of wine was

CENT. II.

Bardeſanes.

each of them became the parent of a new ſect, and patronized ſeveral very important errors. In this, however, it is manifeſt that the authors to whom we allude muſt have laboured under a miſtake, ſince the doctrine of Bardeſanes, as well as that of Tatian, is very conſiderably removed from the Valentinian principles and diſcipline. Each had a manifeſt leaning to the oriental opinions which were cheriſhed by the Gnoſtics reſpecting the origin of all things, and more particularly evil; but by neither was the plan of the Gnoſtics adhered to in endeavouring to produce an accommodation between thoſe tenets and the principles of Chriſtianity. Bardeſanes, who was born of Chriſtian parents at Edeſſa in Meſopotamia, and appears to have been a man of very conſiderable talents and erudition, had, by his writings, acquired for himſelf no little degree of reputation under the reigns of the emperors Marcus Antoninus and Lucius Verus; but having unluckily been induced to eſpouſe the oriental (or, as ancient writers term them,

given to each perſon by the prieſt. When any one did not drink the whole of what was thus handed to him, the remainder was poured into a larger cup that ſtood on the table; and the chalice was repleniſhed with a freſh quantity of wine for the perſon next in rotation. Whatever was left in the ſmaller cup being thus conſtantly emptied into the larger one, the latter of courſe, in time, became full; nor can I bring myſelf to believe that this ſect could have been ſo ſtupid and ſilly as to regard a thing of ſuch neceſſary occurrence in the light of a miracle. What I ſuſpect is, that certain occaſional ſpectators of the Marcoſian rites, obſerving the wine to increaſe in the larger cup, which had been placed on the table empty, without perceiving the actual cauſe by which ſuch increaſe was produced, were haſtily induced to imagine that it was either accompliſhed by the aſſiſtance of ſome evil demon, or otherwiſe brought about by ſome more ſubtle kind of fraud.

Valen-

Valentinian) notions, reſpecting the exiſtence of two principles, he devoted himſelf, for a while, to the propagation of an erroneous doctrine; and, being poſſeſſed of great ſubtilty and addreſs, ſucceeded in gaining over numerous converts, from whence ſprung the ſect of the *Bardeſaniſts* that flouriſhed in Syria and the neighbouring regions [*c*]. After ſome time indeed, he again embraced

CENT. II.

Bardeſanes.

[*c*] Of Bardeſanes we find frequent mention made by ancient writers. His hiſtory is particularly entered into by (amongſt others) Euſebius, *Hiſtor. Eccleſ.* lib. iv. c. 30. p. 151. Epiphanius, *Hæreſ.* lvi. p. 476. Theodoret. *Hæretic. Fabular.* lib. i. cap. 22. p. 208. Auguſtin, *de Hæreſibus*, cap. xxxv. See alſo the *Chronicon Edeſſenum* apud Joſ. Simon. Aſſemann. *Biblioth. Oriental. Vatican.* tom. i. p. 389. et ſeq. Various extracts from his writings are alſo to be met with in Euſebius *de Præparat. Evangelica*, Porphyry *de Abſtinentia*, and the works of other ancient authors, which leave us in no doubt as to his genius and abilities. The nature of his diſcipline is by no one more clearly explained than by Origen, *Dialog. contra Marcionitas*, ſect. iii. p. 70. & ſeq. edit. Wetſen. From all theſe different ſources, however, it is impoſſible for any one to obtain any thing like a full and complete hiſtory of the life of Bardeſanes, or a perfect and ſatisfactory conception of his philoſophy and religion. By more modern writers, therefore, who have undertaken to illuſtrate the hiſtory of this hereſiarch and his tenets (the moſt diſtinguiſhed of whom, in addition to Tillemont, a very laborious and accurate writer, certainly, but one by no means deſerving of the very high degree of reputation which he enjoys, and Aſſemann, to whom I have juſt above referred, are Fred. Strunzius in his *Hiſtoria Bardeſanis et Bardeſaniſtarum*, publiſhed at Wittenburg in 4to. and Iſaac Beauſobre in his *Hiſtoire de Manichee*, vol. ii. p. 128.), we find ſeveral things left involved in obſcurity, and much of uncertain conjecture intermixed with real hiſtory. Reſpecting the origin of the lapſe of Bardeſanes a different account is given by Euſebius from what we meet with in Epiphanius. By the former, Bardeſanes is repreſented as having been addicted to the Valentinian tenets previouſly to his embracing the orthodox faith, whereas the latter ſtates him to have firſt of all cheriſhed the true faith, and then to have been ſeduced

CENT. II.

Bardeſanes.

embraced the orthodox faith, and became the determined opponent of certain of thoſe errors of which he had formerly been the diſtinguiſhed patron and defender; but the poiſon which he had imbibed was never thoroughly eradicated from his mind [*d*], nor was he ever capable of healing the cruel wound which his conduct had given to the intereſts of Chriſtianity. His doctrine was, that all things had originated from two principles; the one good, *i. e.* the Deity; the other evil, *viz.* the Prince and Governor of matter, which he held to be eternal and intrinſecally corrupt. The formation of the world, and the creation of mankind, he aſcribed to the ſupreme and ſuperlatively excellent Deity; but a world of an infinitely better conſtitution than the one which we at preſent inhabit, and mankind of a nature vaſtly ſuperior to that of the human race at this day [*e*]. The primitive world, according

into error by the Valentinians. If, as is moſt probable, Bardeſanes was born of Chriſtian parents, the account given by Epiphanius is certainly the one beſt entitled to credit, and I have therefore, without ſcruple, adopted it.

[*d*] This is expreſsly ſtated by Euſebius, *Hiſtor. Eccleſ.* lib. iv. cap. 30. and might, if it were neceſſary, be confirmed by the teſtimony of other writers. Bardeſanes in fact diſcarded whatever was ſo obviouſly repugnant to the principles of Chriſtianity as not to admit of any thing like a reconciliation therewith, ſuch, for inſtance, as the Valentinian tenets reſpecting an evil principle, the eternity of matter, the body of Chriſt, the return of our mortal frames to matter without any hope of a future reſurrection to life, and the like; but as to the notion of ſin having owed its origin to matter, and various other opinions which he had before been led to eſpouſe, he retained them to the laſt, and availed himſelf of their aſſiſtance in expounding a part of the Chriſtian religion.

[*e*] This notion reſpecting the origin of the world and of mankind moſt deciſively ſeparates Bardeſanes from Valentine and every other Gnoſtic leader, by all of whom the world

cording to Bardeſanes, was entirely free from every ſpecies of evil; and man, as he came from the hands of his Maker, was compounded of a celeſtial mind joined to an aërial or highly ſubtilized body. When the Prince or Governor of matter, however, had ſucceeded in ſeducing the innocent ſoul into ſin, the Deity permitted him to go the further length of enveloping man with a denſe and cumbrous body, compoſed of depraved matter; and, by way of puniſhing the human race for their defection, allowed this author of all evil to mar the fair face of the world, and deſpoil it of the greateſt part of its beauty [*f*]. Hence the perpetual contention between

CENT. II. Bardeſanes.

world was conſidered as having been framed, in oppoſition to the will of the Deity, by a being to whom they gave the title of Demiurgus.

[*f*] It may not be amiſs to apprize the reader that I cannot pretend to vouch the authority of ancient writers for every thing which I have here ſtated. In none of theſe authors, for inſtance, is there to be found any thing reſpecting a primitive world created by God, and a poſterior world corrupted through the machinations of the Prince or Governor of matter; but they all ſpeak as if Bardeſanes had imagined the univerſe, as it is at preſent conſtituted, to have been the work of the Supreme Deity, and conſequently that the world, as we now behold it, differs in no reſpect from the world as it exiſted prior to the lapſe or tranſgreſſion of ſouls. Again, they appear to intimate it as his belief, that men, in conſequence of their diſobedience, were, by way of puniſhment, inveſted by the Deity himſelf with depraved or vitiated material bodies. But I will venture to aſſert, that unleſs we would make Bardeſanes inconſiſtent with himſelf, it is impoſſible to attribute to him ſentiments like the above. For how could any man, who conſidered the Deity as exempt from every ſpecies of evil, and, at the ſame time regarded matter, not only as intrinſecally corrupt, but alſo as ſubject to the dominion of an evil ruler, how, let me aſk, could any man, viewing things in this light, have believed that the *all*-good Deity would either have invaded the vile and contaminated pro-

CENT. II. Bardeſanes.

between reaſon and appetite by which mankind are tormented in the preſent day; for the groſs and corrupt material body with which man became thus inveſted is ever impelling the ſoul to acts of iniquity and ſin. For the purpoſe of putting an end to this calamitous ſtate of things, Jeſus, according to this hereſiarch, deſcended from the manſions above, and

vince of his adverſary and enemy, or moved a finger in giving arrangement or diſtribution to vitiated matter, or, laſtly, have placed ſouls, generated of himſelf, in a region ſo thoroughly devoted to iniquity? By no kind of ſophiſtry could acts like theſe have been reconciled with a nature decidedly hoſtile to every thing evil. Bardeſanes, therefore, muſt either have recogniſed a primitive world, the workmanſhip of the Deity, in contradiſtinction to a later one that had been corrupted by the author of all evil, or he muſt have believed in the exiſtence of a paradiſe beyond the confines of this world, and conceived the univerſe which we inhabit, to have been framed by the Prince or Governor of matter in humble imitation of ſuch paradiſe. In the ſecond place, how could it be poſſible for a man, who was obviouſly anxious to exempt the Deity from every imputation of evil, to have believed that this all-perfect Being was induced, in conſequence of the fall of the human race, to cloath them with a vitiated body, compoſed of matter that was under the dominion of his adverſary, and teeming with every corrupt and depraved appetite? Can that Being be deemed in an abſolute ſenſe good, who is the author or cauſe of ſinful or evil conduct in others? I have no doubt, therefore, but that, in expounding the doctrine of Bardeſanes reſpecting the conjunction of the body with the ſoul, there muſt have been ſomething or other omitted by Origen and the reſt of the ancient writers. According to the opinion which I have been led to form on the ſubject, Bardeſanes muſt have held either that the Deity, in conſequence of man's having ſinned, and thus rendered himſelf ſubject to the dominion of the malicious ruler of matter, would not interfere to prevent the latter from encumbering the human race with bodies formed of clay; or elſe that mankind had, in an unguarded moment, through the machinations of the Author of all evil, been ſo far beguiled, or rather beſotted, as to fall in love with the bodies which he preſented to them, and aſſume them of their own accord.

aſſumed

assumed a corporeal frame; a frame, however, not at all resembling the bodies with which the human race are enveloped, but of a celestial and ethereal nature. It was therefore in appearance merely that this heavenly guest was brought forth, or that he ate, suffered, and underwent death; for that in reality he neither was born, nor did he die [*g*]. The doctrine, which he represented Jesus as having taught, was that the souls of men should yield in nothing to the influence of the body; but be constantly striving to release themselves from the chains of vitiated matter. On the dissolution of the material body, the souls who had availed themselves of the instruction thus afforded them, would, he held, ascend, invested with their original bodies of ethereal mould, into the presence of the Supreme Deity; whilst the terrene and external body itself, which had, in fact, been the prison of the soul, and the origin or fountain of all its transgressions, would, he supposed, again be absorbe in the vast material mass from whence it had been taken, without the least hope of revivifcence or a future resurrection.

CENT. II. Bardesanes.

LXI. Tatian, who was a native of Assyria, and a man of considerable learning and talents, having, according to his own account [*h*], from

Tatian.

[*g*] The opinion thus entertained by Bardesanes respecting the celestial or ethereal nature of Christ's body, must, unless I am much mistaken, have been the only reason that induced ancient writers to class him with the Valentinians, with whom he held scarcely any thing else in common.

[*h*] In his oration "to the Greeks," which has escaped the fate of his other writings, and remains extant at this day. Although not entirely free from errors, it is a discourse replete with various erudition, and written in a

CENT. II.

Tatian.

from a peruſal of the ſacred writings been led to entertain a favourable opinion of Chriſtianity, betook himſelf to Rome, and there aſſiduouſly laboured in cultivating a more intimate acquaintance with its nature and principles, under the tuition of the celebrated Juſtin Martyr. The latter having been called upon to lay down his life in the cauſe of his Divine maſter, Tatian, at firſt opened a ſchool in the city of Rome, but at length was induced to return to his native country, where, either on the inſtigation of his own mind, (for he was naturally of an auſtere diſpoſition,) or by the perſuaſion of others, he was led to embrace the tenets of thoſe who, in expounding the principles of Chriſtianity, called in the aſſiſtance of the oriental philoſophic notions reſpecting the Deity, matter, the world, and the human ſoul. The exact form of the religion which he invented, or otherwiſe adopted, is not to be collected from any ancient writer [*i*]. Of this much indeed we are certain, that it muſt have poſſeſſed ſomewhat of the Valentinian caſt, ſince, beſides aſcribing great honour to the Æons, we find that it recogniſed a diſtinction between the founder of the world and the Supreme Deity, and diſclaimed the notion of

ſtyle by no means deficient in poliſh. It is commonly to be found annexed to the works of Juſtin Martyr, and was in 1700, publiſhed ſeparately at Oxford, in 8vo., accompanied with various annotations, by an Engliſh ſtudent of the name of Worth.

[*i*] Beſides Irenæus, Epiphanius, and others, who have written expreſsly on the ſubject of the early Chriſtian ſects and hereſies, there are many, who, in treating on other topics, have incidentally been led to make mention of Tatian: from none, however, can he be ſaid to have received that meaſure of attention to which a man of his eminence was certainly entitled.

Chriſt's

CENT. II.

Tatian.

Chriſt's having aſſumed a real body [*k*]. There can therefore be no difficulty in accounting for the circumſtance of Tatian's having been regarded by many as a diſciple of the Valentinian ſchool. It is, however, equally certain, that as well in other things, as in the precepts which relate to morality, the diſagreement that exiſted between the ſyſtem of Tatian, and that of Valentine, was far from being either trifling or inconſiderable. Matter, for inſtance, being conſidered by the former as intrinſecally evil, and the bodies of men conſequently as not having been framed by the Deity, but as ſo many priſons of celeſtial ſouls, he willed his followers to abſtain from propagating their ſpecies, and likewiſe from every thing that might conduce either to the ſtrengthening or recreation of their corporeal fabric: in other words he commanded his diſciples to avoid wedlock, to forego the uſe of animal food, as well as of wine, and, leading a ſolitary life, to content themſelves with a very moderate quantity of the moſt ſlight and meagre ſuſtenance. To ſuch an exceſs indeed were his regulations with regard to abſtinence carried, that even in the celebration of the Lord's ſupper, he enjoined the uſe of water inſtead of wine [*l*]. This

[*k*] Vid. Clemens Alexand. *Stromat.* lib. iii. p. 460, & *Excerpt. ex Philoſoph. Orient.* p. 806, Epiphanius, *Hæreſ.* xlvi. cap. i. p. 391. Origen in *Lib. de Oratione* cap. xiii. p. 77. Edit. Oxon. Hieron. *Comm. in Galat.* vi. p. 200, &c.

[*l*] A diſlike to wine ſhould ſeem to have prevailed amongſt the philoſophers of the Eaſt from a very remote period, and more particularly amongſt ſuch of them as believed in a two-fold origin of things, by whom we find it commonly termed the blood of the Devil, or evil principle. See what has been collected on the ſubject by Paul Erneſt Jablonſky, in his *Pantheon Ægyptiorum*, part i. p. 131. In prohibiting the uſe of wine therefore to his followers, Mohammed

CENT. II.

Tatian.

This ſevere and melancholy ſyſtem of diſcipline procured for his followers, of whom Tatian had ſoon to boaſt of great numbers in Syria, the people of which country naturally lean to an auſterity of manners, and ſubſequently in other regions, the denominations of *Encratites*, or "the Continent," *Hydroparaſtates*, or "Water Drinkers," *Apotactites*, or "Renuntiants," of this world's goods, and the like; although it was by on means unuſual, for them to be termed, in reference to the author of their ſect, *Tatianites*, or *Tatianiſts*. A ſpecies of piety that wears an auſtere and rigid aſpect, being ſure to make a conſiderable impreſſion on the minds of people in general, it is not to be wondered at that this ſect ſhould have maintained its ground in various countries, ſo low down as the fourth century, or indeed even later [*m*].

The Ophites.

LXII. That I ſhould enter into a hiſtory of the ſmaller and more obſcure of the Gnoſtic ſects, of which a numerous catalogue might eaſily be collected from ancient writers, will not, I take it for granted, be thought neceſſary; for beſides that nothing of any moment reſpecting them is to be met with on record, it ſhould ſeem that ancient authors fell into the error of

Mohammed does not appear to have originated any new or difficult law, but merely revived and ſanctioned with his authority an ancient regulation of the Arabs, the Perſians, the Syrians, and other oriental nations. We may hence too, eaſily account for that deteſtation of wine by which almoſt all the Gnoſtics of Aſiatic origin, and, at a ſubſequent period, the Manichæans were characteriſed.

[*m*] Vid. Joſ. Simon. Aſſemanni, *Biblioth. Oriental.* Clement. Vatican. tom. i. p. 93. Aſſemann, who was himſelf a Syrian, and well acquainted with the temper and habits of his countrymen very juſtly remarks, that the naturally rigid and auſtere diſpoſition of the Syrians tended greatly to favour the extenſion of this ſect.

con-

considering as separate and distinct sects, what were merely members or branches of other sects, to say nothing of the occasion that was afforded for the mistaken multiplication of sects, by the practice that appears to have prevailed of frequently giving to an individual sect a great variety of denominations [*n*]. I cannot, however,

The Ophites.

[*n*] It would be very possible for any one who might feel so disposed, to collect from the works of ancient writers, a sufficiently extensive catalogue of Gnostic sects, that are represented as not coming within the description of any of those to which we have above adverted. Mention in particular is made of the followers of *Cassian*, the *Docetes*, the *Severians*, the *Apostolics*, the *Adamites*, who are said to have aimed at reviving the manners by which mankind were characterized in a state of primitive innocence; the *Cainites*, who are reported to have held in reverence Cain, Corah, Dathan, the inhabitants of Sodom, and Judas Iscariot; the *Abelites*, who are represented as having allowed of marriage, but at the same time discountenanced the procreation of children; the *Sethians*, who regarded Seth as the Christ; the *Florinians*, a sect that owed its origin to Florinus and Blastus, two Valentinians, who had their residence at Rome, and various others of different denominations. Of any thing that remains on record, however, respecting these sects, it would be but a waste of time to take notice, inasmuch as their history is in part very obscure, in part devoid of every thing like certainty, and in part utterly unworthy of being related. Besides, it is incredible that the Gnostic tribe could ever have been split into such a multitude of sects and factions, although it is not to be denied but that its tenets were well calculated to give rise to a great diversity of opinions. It is my belief therefore, that the variety of names by which it was not uncommon for an individual sect to be distinguished, one, perhaps, having a reference to some distinguishing tenet, another to its founder, another to some particular place or the like, occasionally led people into the error of imagining that there existed so many separate and distinct sects. The error, for instance, that is ascribed to the Docetes, respecting the body of Christ, was not properly the error of one sect, but was common to a great portion of the Gnostic tribe, and I therefore have no doubt, but that those who were termed Docetes by some,

CENT. II.

The Ophites.

ever, omit taking notice of the *Ophites*, a ſorry, infatuated ſet of men, on whoſe tenets Irenæus and other ancient writers have beſtowed a much greater degree of attention than on thoſe of many other ſects. With regard to the firſt riſe of this ſect, there are various conſiderations which will not permit us to doubt of its having had its origin amongſt the Jews, or of its having exiſted long prior to the age of Chriſt. Struck with the magnitude and ſplendour of our bleſſed Saviour's miracles, a part of the Ophites were induced to acknowledge his divine authority, reſerving to themſelves nevertheleſs the liberty of making the religion which he promulgated conform itſelf to certain principles which they had previouſly adopted from the Egyptian and oriental philoſophy. The remainder of the ſect, however, continued to cheriſh their ancient ſuperſtitions, and execrated the name of Chriſt in common with other Jews. Hence aroſe two deſcriptions of the Ophites, the one Jewiſh, the other Chriſtian. The tenets of the latter embraced moſt of thoſe vain fancies which were cheriſhed

ſome, had a different denomination given to them by others: whence it happened that what was merely one individual ſect, was regarded by uninformed people as two. The ſect of the *Ophites*, or Serpentinians, was founded by one Euphrates; in all probability therefore, although they were ſtyled by ſome *Ophites*, yet others gave them the title of Euphratices, and thoſe who were ignorant of this might conſider the latter as a diſtinct ſect from the former. By Epiphanius and others, the Gnoſtics are repreſented as an individual ſect, diſtinct from the Valentinians, the Carpocratians, the Baſilidians, and the reſt: and yet it is notorious at this day, that all theſe latter arrogated to themſelves the title of Gnoſtics, as a badge of ſuperior wiſdom. I intentionally paſs over ſome other things that might be noticed as oppoſed to our believing the heretical ſects to have been ſo numerous as ancient authors repreſent.

by

CENT. II. The Ophites.

by the other Gnoſtics of Egyptian origin, reſpecting the Æons; the eternity of matter, the creation of the world without the approbation or knowledge of the ſupreme Deity, the impriſonment, as it were of ſouls within the body, the directors or rulers of the ſeven planets, or wandering ſtars; the tyranny exerciſed by Demiurgus, whom they termed *Jaldaboth*, and his aſſociates, over celeſtial minds; the progreſs of ſouls aſcending to the Deity through the ſeven celeſtial orbs, and the means which *Sophia*, or *Achamoth* had in contemplation for delivering them from the power of Demiurgus; they alſo held that Chriſt had deſcended from above, and joined himſelf to the moſt juſt and holy man, Jeſus, for the purpoſe of overthrowing the dominion of the architect of this world, but that upon the ſeizure of Jeſus by the Jews, Chriſt withdrew himſelf and returned to his ſtation in the celeſtial regions. The difference therefore between theſe Ophites and the other Gnoſtics of Egyptian origin as to things of any material moment was but ſmall. They had, however, one tenet peculiar to themſelves, and to which they owed the appellation of Ophites, namely, that the ſerpent by whom our firſt parents were beguiled was not an enemy but a friend to the human race, and that it was either Chriſt himſelf or Sophia, who under the diſguiſe of a ſerpent's form wiſhed to overthrow the councils of the architect of this world, or Jaldaboth, and to accompliſh the ſalvation of mankind. Under the influence of this ſtrange perſuaſion they are ſaid to have nouriſhed a number of living ſerpents, and paid them a ſort of honorary worſhip [o].

LXIII. Nearly

(o) For a more particular diſcuſſion of the hiſtory and tenets

CENT. II.

Cerdo and Marcion.

LXIII. Nearly about the ſame time that the Roman church was infeſted by the depraved opinions of Valentine, its tranquillity was further diſturbed by the diſſemination within its boſom of another ſyſtem of heretical diſcipline, that owed its origin to one Cerdo, a native of Syria, a ſyſtem which, if we can depend on ancient authors for having given it to us entire, was certainly ſhorter, more ſimple, and conſequently eaſier to be underſtood, than that of Valentine, but built upon the ſame principles, and teeming with ſimilar depravities [*p*.] With Cerdo was aſſociated

tenets of this ſect, as far as they are at preſent to be collected from ancient writers, the reader is referred to a German work of mine, written expreſsly on the ſubject, and printed at Helmſtadt 1746, in quarto.

[*p*] Reſpecting this Cerdo, whom almoſt all ancient writers concur in repreſenting as the preceptor of Marcion, but who, with greater propriety perhaps, might have been termed by them Marcion's friend and aſſociate, but very little is to be met with on record. We know, indeed, that he was by birth a Syrian, and that he lived and taught at Rome about the middle of this century; but as to every thing elſe reſpecting him, we are left altogether in the dark, or in a ſtate of the greateſt uncertainty. With regard to the life and fortunes of Marcion, not much more that can be relied on has been handed down to poſterity. By moſt of the ancient writers however, the tenets of both have been either profeſſedly or incidentally brought under review. In addition to what is to be met with on the ſubject in Irenæus, (who takes continual occaſion for diſplaying his decided hoſtility to the principles of Marcion,) Epiphanius, Theodoret, and other hereſiologiſts, we find moſt of the early fathers whoſe works have reached our times, adverting to various of the Marcionite tenets, for the purpoſe of expreſſing their deteſtation of them. Were we to be called upon for a reference to thoſe writers from whom moſt information is to be obtained with regard to the diſcipline of Marcion, we ſhould aſſign the firſt place to Tertullian, whoſe five books againſt this hereſiarch we deem worthy of peruſal, although written in a very tumid and embarraſſed ſtyle,

CENT. II.

Cerdo and Marcion.

aſſociated Marcion, the ſon of a biſhop of Pontus, a man of genius and learning, as well as of diſtinguiſhed gravity and moderation, who had, at an earlier period, when he reſided in Aſia, manifeſted his diſſent from the eſtabliſhed tenets of the church, and thereby, as it ſhould ſeem, rendered himſelf an object of public cenſure [*q*]. On

ſtyle, to ſay nothing of the poem againſt Marcion, extending likewiſe to five books, which is commonly attributed to Tertullian, and annexed to his works, although by many thought unworthy of his pen, and aſcribed to ſome other author; and in the next place we ſhould direct the reader to that dialogue againſt Marcion which is commonly, although, as ſome ſuppoſe, falſely attributed to Origen, and was publiſhed ſeparately in Greek and Latin, by J. Rudolph Wetſtein, Baſil, 1674, 4to. From neither of theſe however, muſt the reader expect to obtain a regular and complete view of the ſyſtem of Marcion in all its parts: what they give us is merely a ſketch of its leading features, or rather an exhibition of ſuch parts as are diſtinguiſhed for their deformity, without any kind of order or connection. Of more modern writers, Iſaac Beauſobre has beſtowed great pains in developing the true principles and nature of the Marcionite diſcipline in his *Hiſtoire de Manichee*, tom. ii. p. 69, & ſeq. although in a way that occaſionally favours too much of his propenſity to hunt after excuſes and apologies for heretics. Of Tillemont, Maſſuet, and others, I ſay nothing: all theſe run into the oppoſite extreme, being too ready to give credit to every thing which ancient writers have left on record reſpecting Marcion and his preceptor.

[*q*] Epiphanius (*Hæreſ.* xlii.) relates that Marcion was at firſt diſtinguiſhed for the ſeverity of his morals, and led a ſolitary life, but that becoming the victim of illicit paſſion, he ſeduced a young woman, and was in conſequence thereof excommunicated by his father the biſhop: that finding it impoſſible to obtain the forgiveneſs of his parent upon any terms, he fled to Rome, and endeavoured, by the moſt urgent ſolicitations, to prevail on the preſbyters, by whom the Roman church was at that time governed, Hyginus being dead, to receive him into the communion of the faithful; but that theſe preſbyters conſtantly declined complying with his requeſt, on the ground that it was not permitted them

to

CENT. II.

Cerdo and Marcion.

On his arrival at Rome, Marcion appears for a while to have diſguiſed his real ſentiments with regard to do ſo without the conſent of the biſhop by whom he had been excommunicated, (and in this particular, certainly, the ſtatement is perfectly in uniſon with what we know to have been the ancient diſcipline; for in primitive times it was an invariable rule, that no one who had been expelled from communion with the faithful ſhould be again received into the boſom of the church without the knowledge and conſent of the biſhop by whom he had been excommunicated,) and that Marcion therefore, inflamed with indignation, aſſociated himſelf with Cerdo, who was at that time buſied in diſſeminating his erroneous doctrines at Rome. With the exception of Beauſobre, implicit credit has been given to this by almoſt every writer ſubſequent to Epiphanius; and the ſtatement, conſidered merely in itſelf, has certainly nothing at all incredible in it. There are certain circumſtances, however, which, when they come to be taken into the account, will not permit us to regard the matter as placed altogether beyond the reach of controverſy. In the firſt place, all the ancient writers who treat of the hiſtory and opinions of Marcion, appear to have been quite uninformed as to what is thus related by Epiphanius, except the uncertain author of the Appendix to Tertullian's book *de Preſcriptionibus adverſ. Hæreticos*; and the authority of Epiphanius is certainly, as every one knows, not of ſuch weight as that his teſtimony ſingly ſhould be allowed to overbalance the ſilence of every other ancient writer. And in the next place it is worthy of remark, as has been obſerved by ſeveral of the learned, that Marcion during his reſidence in Aſia, before ever he had viſited Rome, appears to have given diſturbance to the church by his tenets; (Vid. Dion. Petavius *Not. ad Epiphan. Hereſ.* xxii. Joſ. Sim. Aſſeman, *Biblioth. Oriental.* Clement. Vatican. tom. i. p. 389. Jo. Pearſon, *Vindic. Ignatian.* p. ii. cap. viii. p. 372. Anton. Pagi *Critica in Baronium*, tom. i. ad ann. 144. ſect. 3.) which renders it extremely probable that the true reaſon of his being excommunicated by his father was not his illicit amours, but his heretical doctrines. And in my opinion it would be no very unhappy conjecture were it to be ſuggeſted that the meaning of Epiphanius had been miſapprehended, a literal interpretation having inadvertently been given to what this author had never intended to have been received in any other than a figurative ſenſe, and that by the virgin

CENT. II.

Cerdo and Marcion.

regard to religion, under the hope of being able to obtain for himſelf ſome ſituation of dignity in the church; but having, in an unguarded moment, been led to diſcloſe ſo much of the nature of his tenets as effectually to cut himſelf off from every expectation of this kind, (for he was ſo imprudent as in familiar converſation with ſome of the Roman preſbyters to ſpeak contemptuouſly of the books of the Old Teſtament, and the God of the Hebrews,) he at once threw off the maſk, and openly aſſociating himſelf with Cerdo, devoted the remainder of his days to the eſtabliſhment of a new ſect in Italy, and various other provinces through which he travelled [*r*]. So eminently ſucceſsful was he in the accompliſhment of this object, that he left behind him a moſt

virgin whom Marcion is repreſented as having ſeduced, we ought to underſtand merely the Church, whoſe purity he had ſullied by the diſſemination of unſound opinions. The ancient fathers were, it is well known, very frequently wont to compare the church to a virgin, and to treat the inſtitution of a new ſect as a violation of maiden purity. It is alſo by no means impoſſible, that the tranſgreſſion of which it appears from Tertullian (*de Præſcript.* cap. xxx.) and others, that Apelles, the diſciple of Marcion was guilty, might miſtakenly have been imputed to his maſter.

[*r*] According to Epiphanius, Marcion enquired of the Roman preſbyters in what ſenſe we ought to underſtand what is ſaid by our bleſſed Saviour in Luke v. 36. of not putting new wine into old bottles, or ſewing an old piece upon a new garment. The preſbyters appear to have explained the meaning of Chriſt's words as well as they were able, but I am bound to confeſs, in a way that does them but little credit, either on the ſcore of learning or penetration. Diſſatisfied with their anſwer, Marcion is repreſented as having avowed his belief, that by thoſe words it was Chriſt's intention to intimate, that the books of the Old Teſtament were ſuperſeded by his authority, and that thoſe of the New Teſtament were not to be conſidered as having any connection with them.

CENT. II. numerous tribe of followers in almoſt every region of the earth, who, in ſpite of every effort that was made to ſubdue them, continued to maintain their ground down to the fifth, nay, even to the ſixth century [*s*]. Of his diſciples, Lucan or Lucian, Severus, Blaſtes, and others, but more particularly Apelles, are ſaid, in ſome reſpects, to have corrected the errors of their maſter, in others, to have aggravated them, and to have become the authors of various new ſects; but the accounts given of them by different writers poſſeſs but little conſiſtency, and ſeem not at all calculated to ſtand the teſt of ſevere examination.

The ſyſtem of Marcion.

LXIV. Ancient writers vary conſiderably in their expoſition of the diſcipline of Marcion. Their diſagreement, however, is not ſo great as to prevent us from aſcertaining, in a general way, what were his ſentiments reſpecting the origin of all things, and the nature of Jeſus Chriſt, whom he conſidered as having come into the world for the purpoſe of ſaving ſouls. In the firſt place, he, after the example of the oriental

[*s*] Tertullian in his *Præſcript. adv. Heret.* cap: xxx. p. 242. ſays that Marcion was twice excommunicated from the Roman church, and that it was intended to have yielded to his intreaties, and received him back again even the third time, provided he would undeceive thoſe whom he had corrupted with his errors, and bring them back with him into the boſom of the church, but that death overtook him before he could accompliſh this, and that he conſequently died excommunicate. Irenæus has recorded much the ſame thing of Cerdo; and learned men have therefore been led to conclude, that Tertullian has in this inſtance fallen into an error, and imputed that to Marcion which properly belonged to Cerdo. Vid. Tillemont *Memoires pour ſervir a l'Hiſtoire de l'Egliſe*, tom. ii. p. ii. p. 514. & ſeq. The thing is certainly not of ſuch moment as to countenance us in devoting any time to its inveſtigation.

philoſophers,

philoſophers, figured to himſelf two primary principles, from whence all things had proceeded, the one devoid of every thing evil, the other deſtitute of every kind of good; the former the Prince of Light, the latter the lord or governor of matter and darkneſs. Of theſe two deities, the beſt and moſt powerful, not only begat of himſelf a number of immortal and immutable natures of different orders and degrees, but alſo laid the foundations of the ſuperior or celeſtial world in which the ſtars hold their courſe. The Creator of this nether world and its inhabitants, he repreſented as holding a middle ſtation, between thoſe two primary beings, conſidering him as an angel of divine origin, endowed with the moſt extenſive powers, who had formed this viſible univerſe and the human race out of corrupt and ſhapeleſs matter, againſt the conſent of its prince or ruler, mingling however therewith a conſiderable portion of celeſtial or æthereal matter, and uniting with the vitiated and mortal body, a ſoul divine in its origin and endowed with rationality [*t*]. This founder of the world was,

CENT. II.

The ſyſtem of Marcion.

[*t*] None of the ancient writers furniſh us with a complete view of the ſyſtem of Marcion. Its external form may in ſome ſort be collected from them, but as to its interior arrangement we are left wholly in the dark. Upon comparing together early authorities, we, in ſpite of their great diſagreement with each other, are pretty well able to aſcertain what were it's leading features, but as to any of its minor parts, or the way in which the whole might be knit together, we have nothing to guide us beyond conjecture. Conjecture, however, may in this caſe be exerciſed with greater confidence than in ſome others, ſince the religion of Marcion bears a very ſtrong reſemblance to the diſcipline of the Manichees, with regard to which we poſſeſs much fuller information. Marcion no doubt was provided with a long ſtory reſpecting the origin of this viſible world, of a ſimilar nature to that with which Manes furniſhed

CENT. II.

The ſyſtem of Marcion.

was, according to Marcion, that Being whom the Jews worſhipped as the Supreme Deity; the ſame that commiſſioned Moſes, and gave to the Hebrew nation through him a law, a law not indeed poſitively evil, but imperfect, and ſuited to men who were ignorant of the Supreme Deity, and paid greater obedience to their own ſenſual appetites and inclinations, than to the dictates of right reaſon. Between this parent of the material world, and the two above-mentioned eternal principles of all things, the chief point of difference appears to have been that the former was looked upon as being neither poſitively good, nor yet as abſolutely evil; but of a nature partaking of both, or as Marcion expreſſed it, he was *juſt* [*u*]. For

niſhed his followers; but ancient writers give us merely a ſummary of it, and content themſelves with ſtating him to have maintained that the world was framed of evil matter by an angel of the firſt order, whom, by way of diſtinction, he denominated the Deity, or god of the world. As the Marcionites, however, did not pretend to deny but that there were many things good in this viſible world, which could not have been derived from the kingdom of the evil principle, and ſince they moreover admitted that mankind were poſſeſſed of a divine ſoul, a ſoul bearing an affinity to the ſupreme Deity, we are of neceſſity conſtrained to regard them as believing like the Manicheans, that a portion of celeſtial matter had been mingled with that which was naturally evil, and the bodies of men endowed with heavenly ſouls derived from the habitation of the ſupreme Being. This much I have thought fit to add by way of ſupplement to what is to be met with in ancient authors. At preſent I ſee no occaſion for farther remark.

[*u*] There can be no doubt but that the many ancient as well as modern writers, who repreſent Marcion as having taught that the founder of the world was by nature evil, have been guilty of an error. Origen, Tertullian, and numerous other authorities might be cited in proof of his having conſidered the architect of this univerſe, as a being entirely diſtinct from both the good and the evil deity. The Supreme

CENT. II.

The system of Marcion.

For by means of punishments and calamities which the good Deity was from his nature incapable of inflicting, this middle Being took vengeance on all those who neglected his laws, whilst on the other hand, he, with blessings and rewards, which it was not in the nature of the evil Deity to confer, remunerated those who acted uprightly, and led a life agreeable to his commandments. Between him and the Lord or Governor of matter, there was perpetual war. For since, in the creation of the world, and the replenishing of it with inhabitants, he had invaded the province of this Prince of darkness, the latter, out of revenge, set himself to work with every possible degree of care and diligence to seduce mankind from their allegiance to their maker, and bring them into subjection to himself.

Supreme God, the Lord and governor of light, he regarded as in the strictest sense good, so as to be absolutely incapable of harbouring an evil thought or intention; nay, so infinitely benevolent as not to be able to punish, even his enemies. The prince, or ruler of darkness and matter, he believed to be positively evil, an utter stranger to every sort of good, and destitute of the power of blessing, even his friends. The founder of the world, he esteemed as neither good nor evil, but as being what he termed *just*, that is, being invested with the power of either blessing or chastising, he consigned his enemies over to punishment, and remunerated his friends. Origen *Dial. contra Marcionit.* p. 48. edit. Westen. ἡ οὖν μεση ἀρχὴ ὑπηκόουσι τῶ ἀγαθῶ ἄνεσιν διδωσῃ, ὑπηκόουσι δὲ τῶ πονήρω θλιψιν διδωσι. *Medium principium* (i. e. the founder of the world whom he considered as holding a middle station between the good and the evil deity) *quietem præbet illis qui obediunt bono, pœnas autem infligit illis qui parent malo principio.* To which may be added what is said by Clement of Alexandria, *Stromat.* lib. iii. p. 425.—Οἱ ἀπὸ Μαρκίωνος φυσιν κακην - - - - ἐκ δικάιου γενομένην δημιούργου. *Marcionis sectatores dicunt naturam rerum factam esse a conditore seu Demiurgo qui justus est.* More as to this will be found in Beausobre's *Histoire de Manichee*, vol. ii. p. 89, et seq.

CENT. II.

Thoſe ſouls who ſuffered themſelves to be led aſtray by the counſels of this deceiver, and paid obedience to his mandates, would, according to Marcion, on the diſſolution of the body, be ſent by the God of the Jews, the founder and legiſlator of the world, into a place of woe, where they would ſuffer inexpreſſible torments; whilſt thoſe who in ſpite of every artifice remained ſteady in their allegiance to their Creator, would, after death, be transferred into the regions of unbounded felicity and joy [*v*].

The tenets of Marcion reſpecting Chriſt.

LXV. With a view to put an end to this war of the evil principle with the founder of the world, and at the ſame time to recal the ſouls that lay impriſoned within material bodies, back to their true origin, the ſupreme and all-benevolent Deity, according to this hereſiarch, ſent down to the Jews a moſt excellent nature, nearly reſembling himſelf, namely, his ſon Je-

[*v*] I have above expreſſed myſelf nearly in the words of the ancient writers. I will now endeavour in the way of explanation to ſupply what not only they, but more recent authors have omitted. The Creator of the world was, according to Marcion, the ſame with the God and legiſlator of the Jews. They therefore who obeyed him were Jews either by birth or converſion, and obſerved the law of Moſes. His adverſaries were the Gentiles, who, rejecting the God of the Jews, paid their adoration to a multitude of falſe deities. For the Gods whom the heathens worſhipped, Marcion, like moſt of the ancient Chriſtian teachers, regarded as wicked angels or miniſters of the evil principle, the lord or governor of darkneſs. Whoever then paid divine honours to theſe, he of courſe regarded as the ſubjects of the evil principle, the ruler of matter. In ſhort, the ſum of what Marcion wiſhed to inculcate appears to have been this, that the Jews excluſively would be ſaved, inaſmuch as they continued ſtedfaſt in their obedience to the founder of the world, but that perdition would be the lot of all the heathen nations, in conſequence of their yielding themſelves ſervants to the evil deity.

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ſus Chriſt, inveſting him with no ſort of body or material cloathing, but merely with ſuch a ſemblance or likeneſs of a body as might render him viſible to human eyes [*w*]. The ſon, with a view to obtain for himſelf a more ready attention from the people to whom he was thus commiſſioned, pretended that he was the Chriſt of whom their ancient prophets had ſung, and demonſtrated the truth of his legation by a variety of miraculous acts [*x*]. With reſpect to the nature

CENT. II.

The tenets of Marcion reſpecting Chriſt.

[*w*] Ancient writers are far from being either conſiſtent or perſpicuous in their expoſition of the tenets of Marcion reſpecting the Son of God. Such particulars relating to this ſubject as are expreſsly handed down to us by the majority of thoſe fathers who in point of weight and antiquity are beſt entitled to credit, or which may fairly be deduced from their writings in the way of inference, the reader will find given above. From theſe it is perfectly clear that Marcion would not allow that the Saviour of the world was cloathed with a real body, or took upon him our nature: but whether he believed him to have been inveſted with merely the ſhadow or reſemblance of a body, or with a body compoſed of refined ethereal matter, appears to admit of ſome doubt. Each of theſe opinions has its abettors. Another point that may be ſaid to admit of being conteſted, with little advantage in point of argument on either ſide, is, whether Marcion believed the Son of God to have made his appearance amongſt the Jews on a ſudden, under the form or likeneſs of a perfect man, or conceived him to have been apparently born of a virgin, in like manner as he believed him in appearance, and according to the opinion of mankind, to have died?

[*x*] Marcion was ready to admit that the ancient Jewiſh prophets, whoſe writings are comprized in the code of the Old Teſtament, had held forth the promiſe of a Meſſiah or deliverer to the Hebrew nation: nor did he pretend to doubt, as is manifeſt from a paſſage of Tertullian which we ſhall preſently bring forward, but that this Meſſiah would, at ſome time or other, actually make his appearance, and in a certain degree reſtore the fallen fortunes of the houſe of Iſrael. But he poſitively denied that our bleſſed Saviour was ſuch Meſſiah: and indeed, according

CENT. II.

ture of Chriſt's functions, Marcion held, that he, in the firſt place, had it in command to revive amongſt

The tenets of Marcion reſpecting Chriſt.

to his tenets, it was impoſſible for him to act otherwiſe. For ſince it was his belief that the God whom the Jews worſhipped was merely the founder of this world, and not the ſupreme or ſuperlatively excellent Deity, it could not but follow that he ſhould have regarded the ancient Jewiſh prophets as the legates merely of this creator of the univerſe, and not of the Supreme Being, and likewiſe have conceived that the Meſſiah, whoſe advent they predicted, would not be one and the ſame with the Son of the Moſt High, whom he believed to have made his appearance in Jeſus with a view to the ſalvation of men's ſouls. For it was not to be imagined that the Lord of everlaſting light, or the Supreme Deity would commiſſion the ſervants of the architect of this world, a being ſo vaſtly inferior to himſelf, to announce the advent of his ſon. It however militated in no trifling degree againſt this opinion, that the Son of God actually profeſſed himſelf to be that Chriſt or Meſſiah whoſe coming had been predicted by the prophets of the Old Teſtament. For notwithſtanding that Marcion had a proper goſpel of his own, differing conſiderably from ours, and maintained that ſuch particulars in the hiſtory of Chriſt as were in oppoſition to his tenets ought to be rejected as ſpurious interpolations, he had not the hardihood to call in queſtion ſuch a glaring fact as that of our bleſſed Saviour's having, throughout the whole courſe of his miniſtry amongſt the Jews, maintained that he was that Meſſiah whom their prophets had taught them to expect By way of removing this obſtacle therefore, Marcion aſſerted that our Saviour had in this inſtance practiſed a deception on the Jews, and falſely perſonated their promiſed Meſſiah by way of obtaining from them a more favourable reception and hearing. *Conſtituit Marcion*, ſays Tertullian, (*contr. Marc.* lib.iii. cap. xv.) *alium eſſe Chriſtum qui Tiberianis temporibus a Deo quondam ignoto* (*i. e.* the good principle) *revelatus ſit in ſalutem omnium Gentium, alium qui a Deo creatore* (*i. e.* the God of the Jews, whom he termed Juſt) *in reſtitutionem Judaici ſtatus ſit deſtinatus quandoque venturus. - - - ſed quomodo inquit* (Marcion) *irreperet* (Jeſus or the Son of God) *in Judæorum fidem, niſi per ſolemne apud eos et familiare nomen* (namely that of Chriſt). Now one who could believe that the Son of God himſelf had recourſe to fraud and lying for the purpoſe of inſinuating himſelf with the Jews, muſt neceſſarily have conceived

CENT. II.

The tenets of Marcion reſpecting Chriſt.

amongſt mankind the knowledge and worſhip of the ſupreme and only true God, and to overthrow, not only the kingdom of the Prince of Darkneſs, which had its foundation in, and was upheld by ſuperſtition, but alſo the government and dominion of the founder of this world, or the God of the Jews: and in the next place, he was to ſupply the ſouls endowed with reaſon, with inſtruction as to the means whereby they might cleanſe themſelves from the contagion of the body and of matter, and render themſelves worthy of attaining to everlaſting felicity in the realms of light. Such being the objects of his miſſion, he was at once aſſailed with the united ſtrength of the Prince of Darkneſs and the founder of this world. The latter in particular, perceiving that no reſpect whatever was paid by Jeſus to his law, and that his ſubjects were incited to ſedition, procured him to be apprehended by his ſervants, and condemned to undergo the puniſhment of death, not being in the leaſt aware that the perſon with whom he had to deal was the ſon of the ſupreme Deity. His expectations, however, were completely diſappointed: for as Jeſus was not inveſted with a real body, it was impoſſible that he could be ſubjected to puniſhment, or die. Chriſt, however, permitted his imaginary body to be apparently puniſhed and deprived of life, by way of impreſſing on the minds of mortals, that the vile and corrupt body wherewith they are cloathed,

ceived that every ſpecies of fallacy was allowable which might contribute towards advancing the truth, and I am therefore induced to think, that ancient writers are deſerving of credit in what they ſtate as to Marcion's having vitiated, mutilated, and in divers reſpects altered, the books of the New Teſtament.

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CENT. II.

The tenets of Marcion reſpecting Chriſt.

ought to be deemed unworthy of the leaſt conſideration by a wiſe and religious man [*y*]. Having executed his commiſſion here on earth, the Son of God, according to Marcion, deſcended into the infernal regions, and ſet at liberty all thoſe ſouls whom the Founder of the world had there condemned to the flames, in conſequence of their having manifeſted a contempt for his law [*z*]. The

[*y*] What I here ſtate reſpecting the motive for Chriſt's undergoing a feigned death is merely a conjecture of my own. Marcion indiſputably denied that Chriſt in reality either ſuffered or died; but, at the ſame time, he affirmed that his imaginary or apparent death was attended with ſalutary conſequences to the human race. For we find Megethus, a Marcionite, repreſented by Origen, *Dial. contr. Marcion.* ſect. ii. p. 53. as thus ſpeaking: ὁ δημιουργὸς ἰδὼν τὸν ἀγαθὸν λυοντα αὐτοῦ τὸν νόμον ἐπιβέλευσεν αὐτῷ, μὴ εἰδὼς, ὅτι ὁ θάνατος τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ σωτηρία ἀνθρώπων ἐγίνετο. *Conditor* (*i. e.* the Founder of the world, or God of the Jews) *ubi animadvertit bonum illum* (*i. e.* Jeſus, the Son of the good Deity) *legem ſuam* (*viz.* the law of Moſes) *violare, ſtruxit ei inſidias, neſcius boni hujus* (*i. e.* Jeſus) *mortem hominum ſalutem eſſe.* Now, to me, it appears quite impoſſible to divine any other kind of ſalutary conſequences that could be derived by the human race from the feigned death of Jeſus than what I have above pointed out. Jeſus Chriſt, by apparently giving himſelf over to death, meant to impreſs on mankind that neither the body nor the diſſolution of the body deſerved a moment's concern, and that, for the ſake of the ſoul, even violent hands might be lain on the body, inaſmuch as it was a mere machine, compoſed of depraved matter, the very fæces, as it were, of the malignant Deity. Hence all the Marcionites, as we find recorded by the whole body of ancient fathers, ſo far from fearing, or ſeeking to avoid death, were anxious to encounter it, nor were they ever ſurpaſſed by any other ſect either in the number or the courage of their martyrs.

[*z*] Marcion held that Jeſus, after having executed the commiſſion with which he was charged to mankind, deſcended to the infernal regions, and brought up with him from thence the ſouls of all the ſinners of whom mention is made in the books of the Old Teſtament, ſuch as Cain, the Sodomites,

The rule of life preſcribed by Marcion to his followers is acknowledged, even by his adverſaries, to have been ſevere in the extreme. Impreſſed with the belief that the ſoul was conſtantly in the greateſt danger of being enervated and corrupted through the influence of the material body by which it was enveloped, he particularly inculcated the neceſſity of bringing the latter into ſubjection, and recommended to his followers to avoid marriage. He alſo willed them to ſpurn the delights of ſenſe, and content themſelves with diet of a meagre, attenuating nature, ſuch as bread, water, herbs, pulſe, and fiſh [*a*].

CENT. II.

The tenets of Marcion reſpecting Chriſt.

LXVI. The

Sodomites, Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, whilſt he left behind him the ſouls of all the juſt, ſuch as Abel, Noah, and Abraham. See Irenæus, lib. i. cap. 29., Epiphanius, and others. Many, it is true, would have this to be a mere ſtory invented by his enemies; but they labour under an error. From the very nature of Marcion's diſcipline it was impoſſible that he ſhould have believed otherwiſe. According to him the ſinners recorded in the writings of the Old Teſtament had not incurred the diſpleaſure of the Supreme Deity, but offended merely the Founder of this world, or the God of the Jews. Chriſt, therefore, having come into the world for the expreſs purpoſe of putting an end to the dominion of this latter being, it was but juſt that he ſhould ſet at liberty thoſe who were ſuffering puniſhment for their diſobedience to his laws. On the other hand, it was his opinion that the ſaints of the Old Teſtament had never made it their ſtudy to pleaſe the Supreme Deity, but merely the architect of this world; wherefore there could be no reaſon whatever for Chriſt's having any thing to do with them. Beſides theſe latter were not in a ſtate of ſuffering or unhappineſs, but were receiving the reward of their obedience to the Parent of the world and his commandments.

[*a*] That Marcion preſcribed to his followers a rigid and auſtere courſe of life, and that it was the practice of his diſciples therefore to reject every kind of worldly gratification, and paſs their lives in a ſtate of continence, penury, and bodily affliction, ſo as to render the arrival of their

CENT. II.

The hereſy of Montanus.

LXVI. The various commotions which thus aroſe out of the endeavour to bring about an accoſ-

their laſt hour an object of deſire rather than of fear, is admitted by all the ancient Chriſtian writers. I think it right, however, in this place, to repeat an obſervation that I have already made above, namely, that the accounts which are handed down to us by ancient authors, of the rigid and ſevere ſyſtem of moral diſcipline by which certain of the Gnoſtic and other ſects were characterized, are not to be underſtood as applying indiſcriminately to all the individuals of which ſuch ſects were compoſed, but in an eſpecial manner to the prieſts and ſuch ſelect diſciples as might be ambitious of attaining to a more than ordinary degree of ſanctity. For the founders of theſe ſects were naturally anxious for their increaſe and propagation; and being fully aware that the rigid courſe of moral diſcipline which they preſcribed muſt, if generally adopted, tend in great meaſure to defeat this object, took care ſo to temper their injunctions as that the multitude ſhould be at liberty to live after the manner of other people, the more rigid precepts having a reference merely to the public inſtructors and ſuch as were more than ordinarily ſtudious of ſecuring their own ſalvation. To conclude: It cannot fail to be readily perceived by every one who ſhall inveſtigate, with attention, the account here given of the ſects that are uſually claſſed under the general title of Gnoſtics, that the chief point of difference between them reſted in this, that ſome of them recognized the ancient oriental dogma reſpecting the exiſtence of two principles in its full extent, whilſt others abridged it ſomewhat, and ſupplied the place of what they thus cut off with viſionary fancies drawn from other quarters. In the following reſpects they appear to have been all of one mind, namely, — that in addition to the Deity, matter, the root and cauſe of every thing evil and depraved, had exiſted from all eternity; — that this corrupt matter had not been reduced into order by the Supreme and all-benevolent Deity, but by a nature of a far inferior rank; — that the founder of the world, therefore, and the Deity, were beings between whom no ſort of relationſhip whatever exiſted; — that the bodies of mankind owed their formation to the founder of the world, but that their ſouls were the offſpring of the Deity; — that the former, therefore, would return to matter without the leaſt hope of revivification, whilſt the latter, provided they threw

off

CENT. II.

The hereſy of Montanus.

accomodation between the oriental philoſophy and the Chriſtian religion, although in themſelves ſufficiently afflictive, may be ſaid to have prevailed rather without the confines of the church, and to have interfered but little with its internal ſtate. By far more baneful and pernicious in their conſequences to the welfare of the Chriſtian cauſe were thoſe diſagreements and diſſenſions which not long after ſprung up within the very boſom of the church itſelf, and amongſt Chriſtians who in reſpect to the ſum and ſubſtance of religion were entirely agreed. Of this ſpecies of diſſenſions the firſt entitled to notice is that which Montanus, under the reign of Marcus Aurelius, about the middle of this century, originated at Pepuza, an obſcure, inſignificant little village in Phrygia [*b*]. This hereſiarch, a man of

off the yoke of the founder of this world, would aſcend to the Deity, or at leaſt to that region which lies immediately contiguous to the habitation of the Deity. Thoſe, moreover, who were natives of Syria and Aſia aſſigned to matter a peculiar prince or governor whom they believed to have been ſelf-exiſtent, or to have ſprung from matter itſelf; in other words, they believed in the exiſtence of an evil principle as well as a good one. This prince of matter, however, they conſidered as a diſtinct being from the founder of the world. To thoſe of the Gnoſtics who had been bred up in Egypt, ſuch as Baſilides, Valentine, and others, this prince or governor of matter was entirely unknown; but they in their turn encumbered the oriental doctrine with various whimſical conceits, of Egyptian origin, reſpecting the heavens, the ſtars, the deſcent and aſcent of ſouls, the princes or rulers of the wandering ſtars, the eternal forms of all things exiſting in the Pleroma, as well as ſeveral other matters to which the Aſiatics ſeem not altogether to have yielded their aſſent.

[*b*] Reſpecting the tenets of Montanus and his followers we are ſupplied with ſufficient information, as well by the extracts, from certain books no longer in exiſtence, which are given us by Euſebius in his *Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory*, lib. v. c. 16.

CENT. II.

The hereſy of Montanus.

of low origin, and, as it ſhould ſeem, not naturally inclined to evil, but of a melancholic diſpoſition

c. 16. et ſeq. as, from what is left on record by other hiſtorians of ancient ſects, and more particularly Tertullian, who has devoted a ſeries of books to the defence of the Montaniſts and their tenets. My opinion, however, is, that in as far as it relates to this ſect, the teſtimony of this latter writer is not to be received without caution; for to paſs over the fact, that we are quite in a ſtate of uncertainty as to which of his books were written prior to his becoming a Montaniſt and which after, I am altogether deceived if he does not frequently, as is the general practice of advocates, give a certain ſort of colouring to the doctrines of his maſter, and exhibit rather what he wiſhed Montanus to have maintained, than what Montanus actually did maintain. Abundantly ſupplied, however, as we are with information as to the tenets and opinions of Montanus, there is a certain degree of confuſion and obſcurity which reſts over the hiſtory of this hereſiarch and his followers, nor can it, in the abſence of all authentic memorials, be readily reduced into any kind of order. Learned men have diſputed, and ſeem likely, to the end of time, to maintain diſputes as to the exact period of the riſe of this faction in Phrygia. Above I have followed the conjecture that appears to be ſupported, and not without reaſon, by the major part of thoſe who have turned their attention to the ſubject. It is, however, far from being approved of by all. Jo. Phil. Baratier in his book *de Succeſſione Romanor. Pontificum*, p. 135 & ſeq. contends, at much length, that we ought to refer the riſe of this ſect to the year cxxvi. The Abbè de Longerue, whoſe diſſertation *de Tempore quo Montani Hæreſis nata eſt*, is to be found in Winkler's *Sylloge Anecdotorum*, p. 254, endeavours to prove that it ſprang up under the reign of Antoninus Pius about the year cxl. J. Le Clerc, in his *Hiſtoria Eccleſiaſtica duor. prim. Sæculor.* p. 676. places its origin under the year clvii. The calculations of other writers have produced different reſults; but between theſe the diſcordance has not been leſs, ſo that in ſpite of every endeavour to reconcile them recourſe muſt neceſſarily be had to conjecture at laſt. Amongſt more recent writers I have not met with one who has not either condemned or vindicated Montanus to an exceſs. Thoſe who repreſent him as an execrable mortal; a compound of deception, vice, and every ſpecies of iniquity; a wretch imbued with the vileſt

diſpoſition and infirm judgment, in conſequence of ſome morbid affection of the mind, became ſo diſordered in his imagination as to conceive that the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete or Comforter, by

CENT. II.

The hereſy of Montanus.

vileſt notions reſpecting religion, a very bond-ſervant to the devil, and terminate their invective by ſtating him and Maximilla to have been guilty of ſelf-murder, may certainly urge the authority of ancient writers on their ſide; but then they are ſuch writers as are little to be depended upon, and this account of Montanus may therefore well be conſidered as in no ſlight degree overcharged. On the other hand, thoſe who hold him up as a pattern of ſanctity and virtue, a man divinely inſpired, and enduring perſecution for righteouſneſs ſake; one who, with the exception of a few trifling errors, the aberrations of an ingenuous mind, had nothing whatever to be deſired in him; who, in ſhort, would have us believe that the ancient Chriſtians, by whom Montanus was excommunicated, were, as to every thing eſſential, of the ſame way of thinking with himſelf, and, in the ſeverities which they exerciſed towards him, were influenced entirely by prejudice and paſſion, moſt aſſuredly carry their vindication of him to an extent which the truth will not juſtify. That Montanus was not actuated by a wicked mind, but was an ignorant ſimple man but little acquainted with the genuine principles of religion and piety, and that a certain degree of mental imbecility, conjoined with a melancholic diſpoſition, at length drove him out of his ſenſes, is what I feel no difficulty in believing; but that he was a martyr to his ſanctity, and attempted nothing amiſs, or that he was not out of his wits, are points to which I am certain it will never be in my power to yield my aſſent. Great ingenuity and no leſs eloquence have been lately diſplayed in an attempt to diſpel the obſcurity that envelopes the tenets of Montanus by Theophilus Wernſdorf, a man diſtinguiſhed for his learning, and eminently ſkilled in matters of antiquity, whoſe *Commentatio de Montaniſtis Sæculi II. vulgo creditis Hæreticis*, publiſhed at Dantzic, 1751, 4to. reached me while I was engaged on this note. He is the advocate of Montanus, and maintains that the ancient Chriſtians could have had but little if any cauſe for condemning him. The difference in opinion between us is not ſo great as to prevent me from acknowledging that this learned writer has handſomely executed the taſk which he undertook.

CENT. II.

The hereſy of Montanus.

whom the apoſtles of our bleſſed Saviour had been animated, had, by divine appointment, deſcended upon him for the purpoſe of fortelling things of the greateſt moment that were about to happen, and promulgating a better and more perfect diſcipline of life and morals than that which had been built upon the apoſtolic mandates [c]. Teeming, therefore, with this fancied inſpiration,

[c] The ancient writers, whom the greater part of the more recent ones implicitly follow, repreſent Montanus as having ſo egregiouſly violated common ſenſe as to maintain that he was actually the Paraclete, or Holy Ghoſt itſelf. But I ſtrongly ſuſpect that, in this inſtance, the words of theſe authors do not put us exactly in poſſeſſion of their real ſentiments, which, no doubt, were correct. None of them, unleſs I am altogether deceived, could have meant to ſay that Montanus conceived himſelf to be the very perſon of the Paraclete, or that his body was animated by the Holy Spirit in the place of a ſoul; for to have believed this he muſt have been inconſiſtent with himſelf, and the moſt ſilly of all mortals. Theſe writers then could only have meant that Montanus endeavoured to perſuade people that the Paraclete ſpake through him, and that the prophecies which he uttered were not of his own conception, but dictated by the Paraclete; and in this they were perfectly correct, for ſuch was certainly his doctrine. The ambiguity and indiſtinctneſs with which both ancient and modern writers have expreſſed themſelves on this ſubject is to be aſcribed ſolely to the obſcurity of Tertullian, who very frequently terms Montanus *The Paraclete*, and whoſe words and manner of expreſſion theſe authors were led to make their own. What I have ſaid of the man's labouring under ſome morbid affection of the mind ſtands in need, I think, of no juſtification; for ſince the innocence and auſterity of his life abſolves him from every ſuſpicion of evil deſign, and the enormities that we find occaſionally reported of him are undeſerving of any ſort of credit; ſince, moreover, the notion entertained by certain of the early Chriſtian writers, that both his body and ſoul had been taken poſſeſſion of by the devil, carries with it not the ſmalleſt ſemblance of truth, indeed is altogether contradicted by the very prophecies which he uttered, there remains, as it ſtrikes me, no other

CENT. II.

inſpiration, and burſting through every kind of rational reſtraint, he poured forth a multitude of prophecies in which the Roman territory and government were threatened with calamities of the moſt grievous nature; and a ſeverer rule of life and action was preſcribed to mortals in the very words, as it was pretended, of the Deity himſelf. At the firſt he ſo far ſucceeded as to prevail on many to believe, that he was in reality the character which he wiſhed to paſs for, and to win over to his party, amongſt ſeveral others of no mean rank, two opulent women named Priſcilla and Maximilla, who with others of his diſciples pretending like their maſter to the gift of prophecy, diffuſed his opinions within a ſhort time throughout Aſia, Africa, and ſome portion of Europe [*d*]. When people's minds however began in ſome degree to recover from the effect of this firſt impreſſion, and theſe recently divulged prophecies came to be ſcrutinized with proper calmneſs and attention, the impoſture became apparent, and the biſhops of Aſia, after diſcuſſing the ſubject in certain of their councils, adopted the reſolution of expelling Montanus, together with his friends and aſſociates, from every ſort of connection with the faithful. The example thus ſet by the Aſiatic prelates was gradually followed

The hereſy of Montanus.

other concluſion to which we can arrive than this, that he was a man diſordered both in body and mind; unleſs, perhaps, ſome ſhould be willing rather to ſuſpect him of having practiſed a pious fraud.

[*d*] In addition to others diſtinguiſhed for their virtue and ſanctity it appears, that even the biſhop of Rome, whom moſt writers ſuppoſe to have been Victor, was for a while induced to regard Montanus in the light of a prophet divinely inſpired, and that it was Praxeas who awakened him from this deluſion. Vid. Tillemont *Memoires pour ſervir a l'Hiſtoire de l'Egliſe*, tom. ii. p. iii. p. 124. & ſeq.

CENT. II.

The hereſy of Montanus.

by the other Chriſtian biſhops, ſo that the excommunication of the Motaniſts became at length univerſal. Cut off therefore from all intercourſe with the general body of Chriſtians, theſe heretics formed themſelves into a peculiar church, the chief preſident over which had his reſidence at Pepuza in Phrygia. This ſect continued to flouriſh down to the fifth century, when it experienced ſome annoyance from imperial edicts: [e] and the liſt of its members was ennobled by not a few names diſtinguiſhed both for learning and genius, amongſt which none claims a higher rank, in point of celebrity, than that of Tertullian, a man of great eminence certainly, but beyond all meaſure rigid and auſtere, who in ſeveral books written by him expreſsly on the ſubject, advocates with conſiderable firmneſs and

[e] That the ſect of the Montaniſts had not become extinct even ſo low down as the fifth century, is evident from the imperial edicts relating to it that are extant in the *Codex Theodoſianus*, tom. vi. We there find the Montaniſts denounced by a law of Honorius, under the year 398. p. 168. as alſo by another ſevere edict of the ſame emperor, promulgated A. D. 407. (p. 177.) where they are termed Phrygians and Priſcillianiſts, from Priſcilla one of the female converts to Montaniſm, and aſſociated with the Manichees. Under the following year 408. (p. 182.) we find the Priſcillianiſts again denounced by a freſh edict; and two years after, viz. A. D. 410. (p. 186.) under the titles of Montaniſts and Priſcillianiſts, they are ſtill further proſcribed by the emperor Theodoſius the Younger. In the year 415, (p. 200.) another rigid law was enacted againſt the Montaniſts; and finally, in the year 423 (p. 202) we find them made the objects of a penal enactment under the titles of Phrygians and Pepuzites, which latter appellation they acquired from the little town in Phrygia, from whence the ſect had originally ſprung. The frequent repetition of laws like theſe, proves plainly that numerous branches of this ſect were in exiſtence even ſo late as the fifth century.

ſpirit

ſpirit the cauſe of the ſect under whoſe banners he had been induced to enliſt [*f*]. CENT. II.

LXVII. With regard to the leading and generally-received notions of the Chriſtians on the ſubject of religion, Montanus attempted no innovations of any moment [*g*]; nor were his moral precepts

The errors of Montanus.

[*f*] In embracing Montaniſm, Tertullian appears to have been leſs actuated by a cool and diſcriminating judgment than by ſelf-love, or a wiſh to promote the growth of certain opinions to which he was immoderately attached. Moſt of the principles of moral diſcipline propounded by Montanus, ſo far from being either new or unheard of amongſt the Chriſtians, had been actually adopted by ſeveral of them before his time. Of this number was Tertullian, a man of a moroſe and ſaturnine diſpoſition, to whom the moral diſcipline of the Chriſtians in general had long appeared by far too indulgent and relaxed. Upon finding therefore that Montanus was an advocate for the principles which he conſidered as true and juſt, he at once, without ever ſeeing or hearing the man, pronounced that he muſt have been inſpired of the Holy Ghoſt. The object of this good father's patronage was, in fact, not ſo much Montanus as himſelf and his own opinions.

[*g*] Neither Montanus nor his female diſciples in their prophecies made any ſcruple of touching upon the principal dogmas of Chriſtianity; nay, they occaſionally avowed them, and entered the liſts as their defenders againſt thoſe who would have corrupted them. Tertullian in his book *de Reſurrectione*, cap. lxiii. p. 429. repreſents Montanus and his male and female diſciples, whom he deſignates by the titles of *Servi & Ancillæ Dei*, as having ſtood forth in defence of the doctrine of the Reſurrection againſt the Gnoſtics, and alſo as having, *per novam prophetiam de Paracleto inundantem*, removed many of the difficulties with which not only this article of faith, but others were encumbered. *Cujus (prophetiæ,)* he continues, *ſi hauſeris fontes, nullam poteris ſitire doctrinam, nullus te ardor exuret quæſtionum, Reſurrectionem quoque carnis uſquequaque potando refrigerabis.* In the ſame book, cap. xi. p. 386, he adduces a fragment of one of the prophecies of Priſcilla, in which ſhe particularly reprehends thoſe who oppoſed the doctrine of a future reſurrection of the body. *Nemo tam carnaliter vivit quam qui negant carnis reſurrectionem. . . .*

CENT. II.

precepts altogether new and unheard of, or of ſuch a nature as to appear intolerable in the eyes of

The errors of Montanus.

De quibus luculenter & Paracletus per prophetidam Priſcam: Carnes ſunt & carnem oderunt. Diſputing againſt Praxeas, Tertullian aſſerts that the Paraclete recognized three perſons in the Godhead, and that he himſelf had been much aſſiſted by the prophecies of the Paraclete in attaining to a right comprehenſion of this dogma. *Protulit* ſays he (in *Lib. contra Praxeam*, cap. xiii.) *Deus ſermonem, quemadmodum etiam Paracletus* (*i. e.* Montanus) *docet, ſicut radix fruticem, & fons fluvium, & fax radium.* And after ſome intermediate obſervations, he thus proceeds: *Nos qui & tempora & cauſſas Scripturarum per Dei gratiam inſpicimus, maxime Paracleti* (the Holy Spirit ſpeaking as he believed through Montanus) *non hominum diſcipuli, duos quidem definimus, Patrem & Filium, & jam tres cum Spiritu Sancto . . . duos tamen Dominos & duos Deos numquam ex ore noſtro proferimus.* It is plain therefore, that Montanus muſt have diſcuſſed ſome of the moſt weighty points of religion, and reſolved them in a manner ſufficiently ſubtile and refined. In handling theſe topics, however, he appears to have ſtudiouſly avoided bringing forward any thing materially differing from the generally received opinions. St. Jerome, indeed, Epiſt. xxxvii. *ad Marcellam*, tom. iv. Opp. p. 64. edit. Benedict. accuſes the Montaniſts of Sabellianiſm, *illi Sabellii dogma ſectantes, Trinitatem in unius Perſonæ anguſtias cogunt.* But how little faith is to be placed in this accuſation muſt be apparent from the words of Tertullian, above cited, in which he moſt expreſsly declares the Paraclete, as he terms Montanus, to have recognized three perſons in the Godhead. If I may take credit to myſelf for any penetration, the charge thus brought forward by St. Jerome was a moſt invidious and unwarranted conſectary deduced from the circumſtance of Montanus having arrogated to himſelf the perſon of the Paraclete, and aſſerted that the Deity himſelf ſpake through him. For from this, his adverſaries, as appears from Epiphanius, *Hæreſ.* xlviii. § ii. p. 412. tom. i. Opp. were led to conclude that he wiſhed to paſs himſelf for the Deity; and a perſon who had been ſo mad as to have entertained ſuch a wiſh, might certainly have appeared to his enemies, as deſirous of aboliſhing all diſtinction of perſons in the Godhead, and compreſſing the Deity *in unius perſonæ anguſtias*, namely, his own. In thus exonerating Montanus from the imputation of having violated the leading

of the Chriſtians. For in the age in which he flouriſhed there were not wanting, even amongſt the

CENT. II.

The errors of Montanus.

leading principles of Chriſtianity, the reader muſt not underſtand me, however, as meaning to inſinuate that his errors were but of a light or trivial nature. For on the contrary, it is certain that he entertained very injurious, and not only injurious, but highly dangerous ſentiments, reſpecting the moral diſcipline propounded by Chriſt and his apoſtles; a circumſtance of itſelf ſufficient to warrant his being excluded from the number of the orthodox Chriſtians, and claſſed amongſt heretics. He taught, for inſtance, that the moral law was left by the Son of God and his apoſtles, in an imperfect or rude and immature ſtate, and that he himſelf was commiſſioned of the Holy Ghoſt to fill up and bring to perfection what Chriſt had thus left jejune and incomplete. This dogma, Tertullian, the moſt diſtinguiſhed of all the followers of Montanus, heſitates not to propound in the moſt undiſguiſed terms, in various parts of his writings, although, as to other things, he occaſionally has recourſe to ſubterfuge, and endeavours, in ſome degree, to qualify the opinions of his maſter. Let us hear how he ſpeaks in his book *de Velandis Virginibus*, cap i. p. 192. which may be taken as a fair ſpecimen of the whole. *Juſtitia*, (i.e. the moral law,) *primo fuit in rudimentis, natura Deum metuens, dehinc per legem & prophetas promovit in infantiam, dehinc per evangelium efferbuit in juventutem, nunc per Paracletum* (Montanus) *componitur in maturitatem. Hic erit ſolus a Chriſto*, (i.e. after Chriſt) *magiſter et dicendus et verendus.* Can any thing poſſibly be more evident? Montanus conceived that there was as much difference between the moral diſcipline enjoined by Moſes and the prophets in the words of God, and that which was propounded by Chriſt, as there is between an infant and a young man, and that between the moral law of Chriſt and that preſcribed by the Holy Ghoſt through himſelf, there exiſted as great an inequality, as there is between a youth and a man arrived at maturity. In another place *de Monogamia*, cap. xiv. p. 686. Tertullian expreſſes himſelf after the following manner, *Regnavit duritia cordis uſque ad Chriſtum, regnaverit & infirmitas carnis uſque ad Paracletum.* It was his opinion therefore that Chriſt made an allowance for the infirmity of our fleſh, and only contended againſt hardneſs of heart; but that Montanus, by the command of the Deity, aſſailed alſo the infirmity of

CENT. II.

the more orthodox Chriſtians, certain who publicly avowed their approbation of moſt of thoſe points

The errors of Montanus.

the fleſh. Now this was certainly an eſſential error, and involved within it other errors of a like noxious nature, and equally ſubverſive of the true principles of religion. The importance of this error is not diminiſhed, but rather increaſed, by the conſideration that the additions made by Montanus to the moral diſcipline enjoined by our bleſſed Saviour conſiſted merely of certain precepts of light moment relating to faſts, ſecond marriages, the veiling of virgins, and other particulars, reſpecting external demeanour. For ſince Tertullian would willingly have us believe, that by the promulgation of theſe precepts, Montanus, or the Holy Spirit through him, had brought the moral law to maturity, or in other terms given the finiſhing hand to that which was before imperfect, it is plain that he muſt have conſidered external actions, modes, and inſtitutions, and thoſe too of rather a minute and trifling nature, as conſtituting the moſt material part of religion and piety; an opinion equally intolerable and pernicious with the former. Jeſus Chriſt and his apoſtles have left it in command, that we ſhould love the Lord our God beyond every thing, and our fellow mortals as ourſelves. Now theſe injunctions, according to Montanus, were indeed very good, but at the ſame time merely juvenile ones, and calculated only for the Chriſtian world during its minority; whereas the additions made to them by Montanus himſelf reſpecting faſt-days, virgins wearing veils, the avoiding ſecond marriages, and the like, carried the moral law to an infinitely higher degree of dignity and perfection, and rendered it ſuitable to the Chriſtian commonwealth when advanced to the age of manhood and perfection. The ſum and ſubſtance of the moral law therefore, it neceſſarily followed, was to be looked upon as contained in theſe minute and inſignificant regulations. The latter of theſe errors was not, as far as can be aſcertained at the preſent day, ever openly attributed to Montanus by his adverſaries, but he was properly charged by them with the former, as with one of the moſt grievious nature. Nor have I the leaſt doubt but that it was this error chiefly that occaſioned him to be regarded in the light of an impoſtor, and produced the excommunication both of him and his followers. An ancient writer, whoſe catalogue of Hereſies is annexed to Tertullian's book *de Præſcript. Hæreticorum*, repreſents (in cap. lii. p. 254.) the Montaniſts as

points which conſtituted the leading features of the diſcipline which he inculcated; ſuch as that faſts

CENT. II.

The errors of Montanus.

as holding *Paracletum plura in Montano dixiſſe, quam Chriſtum in Evangelio protuliſſe, nec tantum plura, ſed etiam meliora atque majora.* And in this he certainly does them no injury whatever. For Tertullian, whoſe teſtimony neceſſarily carries with it peculiar weight, as coming from one who muſt have been intimately acquainted with the opinions of his ſect, intimates this very thing in the words which we have above cited. The diſcipline of Chriſt is repreſented as bearing merely a juvenile character; that of Montanus one of maſculine vigour and maturity. Who then can entertain a doubt but that the latter muſt have been deemed to have propounded greater and better things than the former? Thoſe who are entruſted with the education of youth, over whom reaſon in general poſſeſſes but little influence, take care to accommodate their precepts to the infirmity of their charge; but greater and better things are brought forward by thoſe to whom is committed the inſtitution of perſons arrived at man's eſtate, and whoſe unruly appetites have been brought into ſome ſort of ſubjection. St. *Jerome*, (Epiſt. xxxvii. tom. iv. Opp. p. 64.) attributes to Montanus the ſame error, but exaggerates and amplifies it beyond all meaſure. *Deum voluiſſe in Veteri Teſtamento per Moyſen & prophetas ſalvare mundum, ſed quia non potuit explere, corpus ſumpſiſſe de virgine, & in Chriſto ſub ſpecie filii prædicantem mortem obiiſſe pro nobis. Et quia per duos gradus mundum ſalvare nequiverit, ad extremum per Spiritum Sanctum in Montanum, Priſcam & Maximillam, deſcendiſſe: & plenitudinem quam Paulus non habuerit... habuiſſe Montanum.* In this certainly, there is ſomewhat of truth, but it is coupled with one or two things that have no foundation whatever in fact. No grounds, for inſtance, exiſt for charging Montanus with entertaining the Sabellian dogma of one perſon in the Deity acting under the different characters of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; a thing altogether foreign from his mind; and the doctrine he inculcated reſpecting a change and gradual improvement in moral diſcipline is invidiouſly transferred to the catholic religion, and the mode of obtaining everlaſting ſalvation. The concluſion to which, I think, equity would direct us, is, that Montanus and his aſſociates were not aware of all the evils with which the great and dangerous error into which they fell was pregnant, and I am therefore unwilling to have him charged with all its conſe-

CENT. II.

The errors of Montanus.

faſts ought to be multiplied and protracted; that ſecond marriages were unbecoming in perſons profeſſing the religion of Chriſt; that the church ought not to extend its pardon to perſons guilty of the more grievous ſins; that all decoration of the body ought to be diſregarded; that for women to array themſelves in coſtly attire was repugnant to the injunctions of the apoſtles Paul and Peter; that the ſtudy of letters and philoſophy tended rather to injure than promote the cauſe of religion and piety; that virgins ought to wear veils, leſt they might awaken impure deſires in perſons beholding them, that it was not allowable for Chriſtians in times of perſecution to betray any thing like timidity, or to adopt a prudential line of conduct; and, conſequently, that it was incompatible with genuine Chriſtian fortitude for perſons, at ſuch ſeaſons, to endeavour to ſave themſelves by flight, to redeem their lives by money, or to hold their meetings for the purpoſes of worſhip by ſtealth or in a private manner. Neither was any ſort of ſtigma conſidered as attaching itſelf to thoſe who defended ſuch opinions, nor does it appear that they were on that account deemed the leſs worthy of being continued in communion with the faithful: indeed by many they were even highly commended, and by others were looked upon with an increaſed degree of reſpect and veneration (*b*). Notwithſtanding, however, that the

quences. The error, however, was in itſelf of the moſt grievous nature, and the accuſers of Montanus appear to have well underſtood its enormity, a circumſtance that muſt be allowed fully to juſtify their ſeverity.

(*b*) Montanus aſſerted that it was the deſign of the Holy Spirit or Paraclete, through his means, to render perfect the ſyſtem of moral diſcipline which Chriſt had left incomplete.

the ſhades of difference between the doctrine of Montanus and that of other Chriſtians as to moſt points

CENT. II.

The errors of Montanus.

plete. The improvements, however, which he ſuggeſted as neceſſary to be made in the Chriſtian code, had not any direct or immediate relation to the amendment of the interior man, or the furtherance of real and ſubſtantial piety, but primarily had reſpect merely to the reclaiming of Chriſtians to a greater degree of ſtrictneſs and gravity in their external demeanour. The moſt material of his precepts I have enumerated above; of which, however, it may not be improper to remark there are three, namely, thoſe reſpecting the neglect of dreſs, the impropriety of female ornaments, and a contempt for letters and philoſophy, which are not expreſsly attributed to Montanus by ancient writers, but which, inaſmuch as they are warmly contended for by Tertullian, the moſt diſtinguiſhed of his followers, might, I thought, with every degree of probability, be reckoned amongſt the number of his inſtitutes. The reſt are indiſputably his. In the firſt place then, he wiſhed to introduce amongſt Chriſtians a greater frequency of faſting than had been cuſtomary. Other Chriſtians, for inſtance, had contented themſelves with celebrating only one ſolemn faſt in the year, namely, the *Antepaſchal* one; but Montanus enjoined his followers to obſerve two additional weeks, with the exception of the Saturdays and Sundays, as ſeaſons of abſtinence, that is, not abſolutely to decline at ſuch times taking any ſuſtenance at all, but to content themſelves with food of an arid, meagre nature, and to drink nothing therewith but water. The manner in which theſe additional yearly faſts, each of which conſiſted of five days, were obſerved, occaſioned them to be termed *Xerophagiæ*. Montanus was alſo an advocate for the multiplication of private faſts: he did not however fix theſe at any particular number, but left every one at liberty to conſult his own inclination, contenting himſelf with merely inculcating, in a general way, that frequent faſting was of wonderful efficacy in appeaſing the Deity, as well as in healing the mind, and fortifying it againſt thoſe evils to which Chriſtians muſt of neceſſity be expoſed. A more rigid celebration of thoſe faſts which they obſerved in common with other Chriſtians was likewiſe enjoined by this hereſiarch to his followers. For whereas the Chriſtians in general were accuſtomed, during the grand yearly antepaſchal faſt, to take ſome ſort of refreſhment after ſunſet, Montanus ordained that thoſe of his ſect ſhould purſue

CENT. II.

points were but trifling, very ſufficient cauſe exiſted for expelling him from all communion with the

The errors of Montanus.

ſue a different mode, and not only at this ſeaſon, but alſo during any private faſts which they might think fit to impoſe on themſelves, retire to reſt ſupperleſs. The weekly faſts that were obſerved by the Chriſtians of thoſe times, *viz.* the fourth & ſixth days, or as we term them Wedneſdays and Fridays, were commonly conſidered as terminating at the ninth hour, or according to modern computation, at three o'clock in the afternoon; but Montanus would not allow of their being brought to ſuch an early concluſion, and inſiſted on it that they ſhould be prolonged until the evening. Of ſecond marriages, which were conſidered by this hereſiarch as unlawful, I ſay nothing. That St. Paul had given his ſanction to them he did not pretend to deny, but contended that the Paraclete had, through him, revoked the licenſe that had been granted by the apoſtle. Againſt Chriſtians guilty of any of the more grievous ſins, ſuch as adultery, murder, and idolatry, equal ſeverity was not exerciſed by all the churches. By moſt of them pardon was uſually granted for the firſt offence to adulterers, but murderers and idolaters were always irrevocably excommunicated. Montanus, however, aſſerted it to be the command of the Holy Spirit, that perſons polluted by either of the three enormous ſins above mentioned ſhould be expelled from the church abſolutely, without any hope of return. Of the hope of obtaining forgiveneſs from God he did not pretend to deprive thoſe people, but he inſiſted on it that the church ought, on no account, to be reconciled to them, leſt in ſo doing its clemency might encourage a diſpoſition to ſin. In moſt churches it was cuſtomary for the widows and wives to go veiled; not ſo the virgins. Montanus enjoined that theſe latter alſo ſhould wear veils. In times of perſecution it had been not unuſual for Chriſtians either to redeem their lives of the Heathen magiſtrates with money, or, if they deemed this not juſtifiable, to conſult their ſafety by flight. Againſt reſorting to either of thoſe expedients Montanus proteſted in the ſtrongeſt terms, and exhorted the followers of Chriſt not to be put to flight by the threats of their enemies, but to meet them manfully and with diſdain. Montanus, however, is not to be conſidered as the firſt author of theſe various precepts, but rather as having enforced what had been originally propounded by others. For as the early Chriſtians differed in opinion as to many other things, ſo likewiſe were

the faithful. For thoſe things which had been merely propounded by others in a ſpirit of meekneſs

CENT. II.

The errors of Montanus.

were they far from being agreed as to the external ſervices that were to be rendered to the Deity; and in the ſecond century there exiſted, if it may be permitted us ſo to ſpeak, two moral ſyſtems, whereof the more moderate and lenient one permitted Chriſtians to follow the ordinary courſe of life in as far as it was not repugnant to or militated againſt the divine commands; but the more rigid and ſevere one ſought not only to ſeparate the followers of Chriſt from the reſt of mankind in their manners, their garments, their diſcourſe, and the whole regimen of their lives, but alſo to impoſe on them many more burthens, and to involve them in greater difficulties and dangers than were attached to the commands either of our bleſſed Lord or his apoſtles. With the exception of a very few things, the latter of theſe ſyſtems may be ſaid to have worn almoſt the ſame aſpect with that which was inculcated by Montanus and his aſſociates. The Chriſtians therefore, it appears, took no exceptions to the precepts of Montanus, nor could they, with the leaſt propriety, have done ſo; for they not only tolerated principles ſimilar to his in others, but even highly commended them. But this they could by no means bring themſelves to bear with, that an individual ſhould take upon him to pronounce thoſe things to be of the firſt neceſſity, which were by others deemed merely good and uſeful; and to obtrude on the brethren his own opinions as new commands of the Holy Spirit ſupplementary to the ſyſtem of morals promulgated by Chriſt: whence it inevitably followed that all who would not adopt them ſhould be regarded as contemners of the Holy Spirit. All the regulations which Montanus was deſirous of introducing amongſt the Chriſtians are manifeſtly in themſelves of a light and trifling kind; but in his opinion they were excellent and of the laſt importance, in fact, every way worthy of being propounded to the human race as coming directly from the Holy Spirit himſelf. The leſs, however, the dignity attached to commands which any one may be willing to have us receive as dictated by the Holy Ghoſt, the greater the crime of him who would impoſe on the brethren ſuch minute and trifling obſervances. Tertullian, indeed, in ſome places ſeems to expreſs himſelf as if Montanus did not conſider his precepts as poſſeſſed of any virtue or efficacy in the attainment of ſalvation, and regarded the communications

CENT. II.

The errors of Montanus.

neſs and without any detriment to chriſtian harmony and liberty, were arrogantly brought forward by him as oracles dictated by the Holy Spirit, for the benefit of the univerſal church; whence it neceſſarily followed, that he muſt have regarded all thoſe who refuſed to place implicit confidence in him and his female aſſociates, as contemners of the Holy Spirit, and conſidered himſelf and his followers as conſtituting the only true church. This one circumſtance of itſelf, without doubt, vir-

cations made by the Holy Spirit to mankind through him, in the light rather of admonition and advice than of laws and commands: but he does this only in places where he is ſeeking to throw all the blame of diſſenſion and diſcord on his adverſaries, or endeavouring to gain patrons and friends for himſelf and his aſſociates. In others, where he aſſumes the character of the diſputant, and undertakes the defence of Montanus, he, in no very obſcure terms, intimates, that thoſe who refuſed to comply with the injunctions of his preceptor, or rather of the Paraclete ſpeaking through his preceptor, deprived themſelves of very material aſſiſtance in obtaining everlaſting ſalvation. And that the genuine ſentiments of Montanus are given us in theſe laſt mentioned paſſages, is placed beyond a doubt by numerous teſtimonies. By way of ſhewing that I do not ſtate this without ſome ſort of foundation, I will adduce one paſſage in which he evidently holds out that by means of faſts expiation might be made for that ſin of our firſt parents, which hath contaminated all their poſterity, than which it is ſcarcely poſſible to deviſe any thing more foreign to the principles and ſpirit of Chriſtianity. *Porro*, ſays he, (in *Lib. de Jejuniis*, cap. iii. p. 705. edit. Rigalt.) *cum & ipſe jejunium mandet - - quis jam dubitabit omnium erga victum macerationum hanc fuiſſe rationem, qua rurſus interdicto cibo & obſervato præcepto, primordiale jam delictum expiaretur, ut homo per eamdem materiam cauſæ Deo ſatisfaciat, per quam offenderat, id eſt per cibi interdictionem, atque ita ſalutem æmulo modo re-accenderet inedia, ſicut extinxerat ſagina, pro unico illicito plura licita contemnens.* In fact, Tertullian is not ſufficiently conſiſtent with himſelf, but, as is not uncommon with perſons poſſeſſing a genius above controul, inclines at this time one way, and at that time another, according to circumſtances.

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tually ſeparated him from the church, and amply juſtified the Catholic Chriſtians in refuſing any longer to hold communion with him and his aſſociates[*i*]. In

CENT. II.

The errors of Montanus.

[*i*]. The opinions of the age in which he lived would not allow of its being imputed to Montanus as a crime, that he aſſumed the character of a prophet. A perſuaſion continued to prevail amongſt the Chriſtians of thoſe times, that the ſpirit of prophecy had not become altogether extinct, and there were then in exiſtence divers perſons who were recognized by the Chriſtians under the character of divine legates. What produced the ſeparation between Montanus and the Catholic Chriſtians was, that theſe latter felt aſſured within themſelves by certain arguments and reaſons, that he was not commiſſioned of God, but of the Devil. This opinion of theirs was grounded chiefly on the three following conſiderations. 1. That his prophetic effuſions were delivered in an ecſtaſy, that is, as I conceive, he profeſſed himſelf to utter theſe commands of the moſt High under the influence of an irreſiſtible impulſe, without being in the leaſt degree conſcious himſelf of what it was he ſaid. 2. That he introduced the Deity himſelf as ſpeaking. 3. That he promulgated, as coming immediately from God, laws that were partly new, and no where to be met with in the ſacred writings, and in part contradictory to the inſtitutions of Chriſt and his apoſtles. Of theſe arguments, the two former ones might, unleſs I am much miſtaken, be confuted and completely gotten rid of, but the laſt is of the greateſt weight, and can by no means be overthrown, although Tertullian with a zeal that may well excite our pity, labours ſtrongly in diminiſhing its force. *Novitatem igitur*, ſays he, (in *Lib. de Jejuniis*, cap. i. p. 701.) *objectant de cujus inlicito præſcribant: aut hæreſim judicandam, ſi humana præſumptio eſt, aut pſeudo-prophetiam pronuntiandam, ſi ſpiritualis indictio eſt. - - - Certe in Evangelio illos dies jejuniis determinatos putant, in quibus ablatus eſt ſponſus, & hos eſſe jam ſolos legitimos jejuniorum Chriſtianorum, abolitis legalibus et propheticis vetuſtatibus. - - - Differenter jejunandum ex arbitrio, non ex imperio novæ diſciplinæ, pro temporibus et cauſſis uniuſcujuſque. - - Sic & Apoſtolos obſervaſſe, &c.* To which add what is ſaid by him in his book *de Monogamia*, cap. i. p. 673. where he clearly intimates it to be a point in diſpute between the Catholics and Montaniſts; *An capiat Paracletum aliquid tale docuiſſe, quod aut novum deputari poſſit adverſus Catholicam traditionem, aut oneroſum adverſus*

CENT. II. In the prophecies moreover which were uttered by this hereſiarch and his female companions there

The errors of Montanus.

adverſus levem ſarcinam Domini. No one ſurely, let him boaſt what he may of being commiſſioned of God to promulgate a more holy and perfect ſyſtem of moral diſcipline than was preſcribed by our bleſſed Saviour and his apoſtles, unleſs he at the ſame time bring forward ſomething that may aſſiſt our faith, or contribute towards the further purification of our minds, can have the leaſt pretenſions to be ranked amongſt the number of divinely-inſpired teachers or prophets. By the adverſaries of Montanus, indeed, ſomewhat more has been built upon this argument than can, in point of fairneſs, be deduced from it, for it certainly by no means warranted the concluſion that Montanus was inſpired of the Devil. The argument itſelf, however, is in no degree affected by this error, but was poſſeſſed of the ſame force in that age as it has at preſent. Montanus on the other hand moſt ſtrenuouſly contended, that the Deity himſelf, or the Paraclete, ſpake through him, and was loud in his reproach of all thoſe who refuſed him their ſupport. The only true church, he aſſerted, conſiſted of himſelf and his followers; the reſt were, without exception, condemned by him as ſpurious. An ancient writer, cited by Euſebius (*Hiſtor. Eccleſ.* lib. v. cap. xvi. p. 181), ſays, τὴν δὲ καθόλου καὶ πασῶν τὴν ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανὸν ἐκκλησίαν βλασφημεῖν διδάσκοντος τῷ ἀπηυθαδισμένῳ πνεύματος, ὅτι μήτε τιμὴν μήτε πάροδον εἰς αὐτὴν τὸ ψευδοπροφητικὸν ἐλάμβανε πνεῦμα. *Univerſam vero, quæ per orbem terrarum ſparſa eſt, eccleſiam, idem ille arrogantiſſimus ſpiritus maledictis appetere eos docebat, eo quod nec honorem nec aditum ullum ad ipſam pſeudo-propheticus ſpiritus aperiret.* And beyond all doubt this ſtatement is entitled to the higheſt credit, for unleſs Montanus would have been inconſiſtent with himſelf, it was neceſſary for him boldly to aſſert that all ſuch churches as oppoſed him were at enmity with the Holy Spirit, and alienated from God. Themiſon, in like manner, who ranks not as the laſt of his adherents, is charged by Apollonius *apud Euſeb.* l. c. cap. xviii. p. 185. with having, in the catholic epiſtle that he wrote, ſpoken blaſphemouſly of our Lord and his apoſtles, (*viz.* by aſſerting that the moral diſcipline which they had inculcated was imperfect), and alſo of the holy church: Βλασφημῆσαι δὲ εἰς τὸν κύριον καὶ τοὺς Ἀποστόλους καὶ τὴν ἁγίαν ἐκκλησίαν. Hence Montanus (as is alſo intimated by Apollonius *apud Euſeb.* l. c. cap. xviii. p. 184.

there was a tone which might well induce the Chriſtians at large to avoid maintaining any ſort of intercourſe

CENT. II.

The errors of Montanus.

p. 184. and confirmed by the teſtimony of other authors), was led to give Pepuza and Tymium, the two little towns of Phrygia, where he and his aſſociates reſided, the title of Jeruſalem, *i. e.* the only true church, with a view to gather together there men from all parts. Tertullian is not at all more mild or lenient than theſe, although, as I have above noticed, he occaſionally ſeems deſirous of paving the way towards an accommodation; for he takes every opportunity of loading all ſuch Chriſtians as differed from Montanus, with contumely, and conſtantly applies to them the title Pſychici, *i. e.* men deſtitute of the Holy Spirit; whilſt he terms thoſe who ſided with that hereſiarch, Spirituales, and the only Holy. *Penes nos autem*, ſays he, in *lib. de Monogamia*, cap. i. p. 673. *quos ſpiritales merito dici facit agnitio ſpiritalium chariſmatum, continentia tam religioſa eſt. - - - Sed Pſychicis non recipientibus ſpiritum ea quæ ſunt ſpiritus non placent.* What need I add that in his book *de Pudicitia*, cap. xxi. p. 744. he, without the leaſt circumlocution denies any church in oppoſition to Montanus to be the true one? *Quid nunc & ad eccleſiam & quidem tuam Pſychice? - - - Eccleſia proprie & principaliter ipſe eſt ſpiritus, in quo eſt Trinitas unius Divinitatis, Pater & Filius & Spiritus Sanctus.* (where we may obſerve by the bye, the grounds on which Montanus and his followers came to be charged with Sabellianiſm. For Tertullian ſpeaks as if he believed all the three perſons of the divine nature to be only that one which animated Montanus. *Et ideo eccleſia quidem delicta condonabit, ſed eccleſia ſpiritus* (*i. e.* of Montanus), *per ſpiritalem hominem, non eccleſia numerus epiſcoporum.* From what we have thus adduced it is manifeſt, that inſtead of the Catholic Chriſtians expelling Montanus from the church, the ſeparation rather originated with him, and that he withdrew himſelf from a church that he could not conſider as the true ſpouſe of Chriſt. And indeed the Montaniſts themſelves confeſſed that the origin of the diviſion was not to be imputed to the Catholic Chriſtians, but that they themſelves firſt ſeceded, refuſing any longer to hold communion with what Tertullian terms *Pſychica et carnalis eccleſia.* Epiphanius *Hæreſ.* xlviii. cap. xii. p. 413. λέγουσι διὰ χαρίσματα ἀφεςάναι τῆς ἐκκλησίας. *Jactant ſe ob cæleſtia dona* (*i. e.* the Prophecies of Montanus which the Catholic Chriſtians rejected) *ab eccleſia diſceſſiſſe.*

And

CENT. II.

The errors of Montanus.

intercourſe with him; for ſince he announced the moſt diſaſtrous fortunes as awaiting the human race, there was certainly reaſon to apprehend that the Chriſtians, if they continued in aſſociation with him might come to be regarded as enemies to the commonwealth [*k*].

LXVIII. Amongſt

And the ſame author twice recognizes this as a true repreſentation of the caſe in the introduction to his hiſtory of this ſect, remarking, in cap. i. p. 402, 403, that the Montaniſts ſeparated themſelves (ἀπέσχισαν δὲ ἑαυτὰς), from the church; and a little while after that ἐξέβησαν ἐκ τῶν ἁγίων, they withdrew themſelves from the fold of the ſaints. All ſort of communion being renounced, and war publicly declared, by Montanus, againſt the church, the biſhops of Aſia retaliated by diſclaiming, in ſolemn convocation, all further connection with a man whoſe hoſtility to the church was, by his own declaration, thus placed beyond a queſtion. And to what other concluſion, I pray, could this affair have led? Between a man who, profeſſing himſelf to be a legate of the moſt High, declares war againſt all ſuch as may venture to call in queſtion his commiſſion, and thoſe who not only call in queſtion ſuch his commiſſion, but alſo think themſelves juſtified in regarding that man as a falſe prophet, and one of the agents of the devil, what ſort of communion, either of offices or religion, can, for a moment, poſſibly be maintained? I have entered the more fully into this ſubject for the purpoſe of ſhewing what a wrong eſtimate, reſpecting the ſchiſm of Montanus, has been formed by ſuch of the learned as attribute the whole blame of diſcord and diviſion, on this occaſion, to the Catholic Chriſtians. That the conduct of theſe latter was in no degree reprehenſible is what I do not take upon me to aſſert; but this much, certainly, is apparent, that Montanus originated the quarrel, and that the Catholic Chriſtians had abundant cauſe for condemning a man who had not only imbibed the moſt pernicious opinions, but had alſo been the author of a ſchiſm or ſeparation in the church.

[*k*] At the time when Montanus propheſied, namely, under the reign of the emperor Marcus Aurelius the philoſopher, the affairs of the Chriſtians were every where, as we have above ſhewn, involved in the utmoſt peril. It became, therefore, a matter of the very firſt importance to them to be ſtrictly on their guard, leſt, in any thing which they

LXVIII. Amongſt the adverſaries of Montanus none held a more diſtinguiſhed place than Praxeas, a man

CENT. II.

Praxeas.

they might ſay, teach, or do, they might lay themſelves open to miſrepreſentation, or furniſh the Romans with any pretext for accuſation or complaint. But that imprudent, or rather inſane man, Montanus, predicted, without reſerve, a variety of things in the higheſt degree obnoxious to the Romans; ſuch, for inſtance, as the overthrow of their city and empire; the deſtruction that awaited the world; wars, plagues, and calamities of divers kinds, that might ſpeedily be expected, as well as the tremendous advent of Antichriſt; concerning which things, whoever dared to utter any prophecies, were always conſidered by the Romans as enemies to the ſtate, and conſequently made to undergo capital puniſhment. Tertullian, in his apology for Montanus, a work that unfortunately has periſhed, reduces the whole matter in diſpute between his maſter and other Chriſtians under two general heads, namely, "ſecond marriages," and "the future judgment." His words are preſerved in the ancient work edited by J. Sirmond, Paris, 1645, 8vo. that goes under the title of *Prædeſtinatus*, lib. i. cap. xxv. p. 30. *Hoc ſolum diſcrepamus, quod ſecundas nuptias non recipimus, et prophetiam Montani de futuro judicio non recuſamus.* It is to be obſerved that Tertullian here makes light of the controverſy between Montanus and the church, as was cuſtomary with him whenever he conceived that it might tend to promote his purpoſe; but on this we ſhall not ſtay at preſent to make any remark. All that we would wiſh to impreſs on the reader's attention is, that it is clear from theſe words that Montanus had, amongſt other things, predicted ſomewhat reſpecting a future judgment, and that this prophecy of his was held moſt ſacred, and had more than ordinary weight attached to it by his followers; but that it was marked with the moſt decided diſapprobation by the catholic Chriſtians. It would be idle in any one to pretend to refer this prediction to the laſt general judgment of the world and the human race; for as to this there was the moſt perfect accordance between Montanus and all other Chriſtians. Indeed it was impoſſible that the Chriſtians ſhould make it a matter of accuſation againſt Montanus, that he predicted the near approach of the laſt judgment; for it was at that time a point of common belief with the whole church, that the final conſummation of all things was at hand. We are

CENT. II. Praxeas.

a man of no mean reputation in the church, inaſmuch as he had, on an occaſion that involved his

bound to conclude, therefore, that Montanus predicted the approach of ſome particular judgment (*i. e.* ſome calamities and evils not far remote) of which the Chriſtians knew that they could not join with him in propheſying without involving themſelves in the utmoſt peril. But what elſe could this be than the judgment that awaited the Roman empire? The temerity of this man, unleſs I am altogether deceived, was ſuch, that he announced the moſt ſignal puniſhments as about to fall on the Romans, the enemies of the Chriſtian faith, and predicted, at no very diſtant period, the final overthrow of the whole empire. That other Chriſtians, as to this, entertained a belief ſimilar to his, namely, that our bleſſed Saviour would ſpeedily avenge the blood of his ſlaughtered ſervants on the Romans, and overturn their government, is what I very well know. But of this their belief they made a ſecret, referring it to the *Diſciplina Arcani*, or that kind of knowledge which it was deemed expedient to cheriſh in ſilence, and entruſt only to a few of approved ſtability and faith, inaſmuch as they were well aſſured that any diſcloſure or promulgation of it could not be made without expoſing their fortunes to the utmoſt jeopardy and hazard. And in this place I will content myſelf with referring merely to thoſe prophecies reſpecting the dreadful calamities which awaited the Roman empire, that are ſet down as received from the mouths of the Chriſtians by the author of *Philopatris* (a work commonly aſcribed to Lucian): vid. *Luciani Opera*, tom. iii. p. 613 & ſeq. edit. Reizian. Hence we are furniſhed with an eaſy interpretation of the words of an ancient writer cited by Euſebius, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. v. cap. xvi. p. 180, and of which the learned have hitherto confeſſed themſelves utterly unable to elicit the meaning. He ſays that Montanus foretold things that were to come, παρὲ τὸ κατὰ παράδοσιν καὶ κατὰ διαδοχὴν ἀνῳδὴν τῆς ἐκκλησίας, ἔθος, *præter morem atque inſtitutum Eccleſiæ a majoribus traditum et continua deinceps ſucceſſione propagatum*; which is as much as to ſay that it was the ancient and invariable uſage of the church cautiouſly to abſtain from divulging or making public mention of any tenets or prophecies that might tend to excite animoſity againſt the Chriſtians, or bring them into danger; ſuch, for inſtance, as thoſe which reſpected the coming of Antichriſt, the overthrow of the Roman

his life in the utmoſt peril, manfully avowed his faith in Chriſt before a heathen tribunal, and on the ſame account undergone an impriſonment of no inconſiderable duration [*l*]. Having at a ſubſequent

CENT. II.

Praxeas.

Roman empire, or any other impending evils or calamities. But Montanus broke through this cuſtom, and proclaimed to the world what had never before been communicated to any except confidential ears. And in this moſt hazardous line of conduct the females, who had eſpouſed the cauſe of Montanus, ſhould ſeem to have been by no means backward in following the example of their maſter; for Maximilla predicted πολέμους καὶ ἀκαταστασίας, "wars and tumults" as awaiting the Roman empire (Euſeb. l. c. p. 182), and that, after her death, no more propheteſſes would ariſe, but people might look for συντέλειαν τοῦ αἰῶνος "the conſummation of all things." Theſe prophecies, ſuppoſing that nothing elſe offenſive or objectionable had been brought forward by Montanus and his aſſociates, muſt ſurely, of themſelves, have juſtified all ſuch Chriſtians as had the welfare of the church at heart, in excluding theſe bold and incautious men from their ſociety. The ſect of the Montaniſts, as they themſelves boaſt, and the ancient fathers do not pretend to deny, abounded in martyrs. It ſhould ſeem, however, not at all improbable, that moſt of theſe might have fallen martyrs to their own imprudence and temerity, rather than in the cauſe of Chriſt, and been put to death by the Roman magiſtrates as conſpirators againſt the commonwealth.

[*l*] For whatever can, with any degree of certainty, be offered in the way of hiſtory reſpecting Praxeas, we are of neceſſity indebted wholly to the treatiſe written in confutation of his doctrine by Tertullian, a work by no means deficient either in learning or addreſs, but obſcure in the extreme, and vehement beyond all meaſure; a work, in fact, written by a man who was an enemy, not only to the Praxean doctrine, but alſo to the author of that doctrine, inaſmuch as he had been the chief inſtrument in prevailing on the biſhop of Rome, who had at firſt lent a favourable ear to Montanus and his prophecies, and whom learned men conceive to have been Victor, to change ſides, and go over to his adverſaries. This offence againſt his maſter kindled ſuch wrath in the boſom of Tertullian, that he ſets no bounds whatever to his reprehenſion, and occaſionally breaks out into an abuſive ſtrain, altogether unbecoming the

CENT. II.

Praxeas.

ſubſequent period, however, been led to engage zealouſly in the taſk of combating the erroneous doctrines of others, he unfortunately fell into an error himſelf reſpecting the Divine Nature and the Saviour of the human race, not at all leſs grievous than thoſe with which he had undertaken to contend; for by means of various arguments, ſupported by paſſages drawn from the holy ſcriptures, he endeavoured to do away all diſtinction between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and maintained that it was not ſome one divine Perſon, but the Father, the ſole Creator of all things, that united himſelf with human

Chriſtian character. In contemplating the nature of Praxeas's error, I have been led to ſuſpect, and I think not without reaſon, that ſuch error might have had its origin in his hoſtility to Montanus. Montanus, as appears from Tertullian, had, in his oracles, treated of the dogma of the exiſtence of three perſons in the divine nature, and ſtudiouſly inculcated a true and real diſtinction between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Vid. Tertullian *contra Praxeam*, c. xiii. p. 644. *Nos*, ſays he, *maxime Paracleti, non hominum diſcipuli, duos quidem definimus, Patrem et Filium, et jam tres cum Spiritu Sancto, ſecundum rationem œconomiæ, quæ facit numerum.* And in the ſame book, cap. ii. p. 635, Tertullian avows himſelf, by means of the Paraclete (*i. e.* Montanus), whom he terms *deductor omnis veritatis*, to have been better inſtructed in the dogma reſpecting God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; that is, he had received from the mouth of the Paraclete a fuller and clearer knowledge of that dogma. Praxeas, then, the decided opponent of Montanus as to moſt other things, being in all probability determined to have nothing whatever in common with ſuch a man, and expecting perhaps that it might place his adverſary in a ſtill more invidious light, came, as I ſuſpect, to the reſolution of reſiſting him on this ground alſo, and, in oppoſition to the dogma of Montanus, recognizing a Trinity of Perſons in the Godhead, ſent forth his own dogma aſſerting the abſolute individuality of the Deity. An infinity of examples might be adduced of men whom the very love of truth itſelf has plunged into error.

nature

nature in the perſon of Chriſt. Hence his followers came to be termed *Monarchians* and *Patripaſſians*[*m*]. Being detected in this error, and publicly

CENT. II. Praxeas.

[*m*] Tertullian's book againſt Praxeas is unqueſtionably of a very ſufficient length, but at the ſame time it is not ſo explicit as to bring us thoroughly acquainted with the opinions of the man whom it is its object to confute. Of this indeed it leaves us in no doubt, that Praxeas denied a diſtinction of perſons in the Divine Nature, we mean, any real diſtinction between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and contended for what is termed by Tertullian the *Monarchy* of God. In fact, it ſhould ſeem that he conſidered thoſe who recognized any real diſtinction between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as maintaining the exiſtence of three Gods. After what manner, however, Praxeas expounded thoſe paſſages of Scripture which relate to the Son and the Holy Spirit, and contrived to make them accord with his tenets, is far from being equally perſpicuous. From certain paſſages in Tertullian's work, it ſhould ſeem to have been the opinion of this hereſiarch, that, by the terms Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three modes of exiſtence, as well as agency of the Divine Nature, were indicated, and that the Deity, when exiſting and operating in Chriſt, after a new and unaccuſtomed manner, aſſumed the title of Son, but that, when reſiding and acting in holy and pious perſons, it was his will to be denominated the Holy Spirit. *Poſt tempus*, ſays Tertullian, when ſpeaking the ſentiments of his adverſary, cap. ii. p. 634. *pater natus et pater paſſus; ipſe Deus, Dominus omnipotens, Jeſus Chriſtus prædicatur.* And ſhortly after, cap. iii. p. 635. *Unicum Deum non alias putat credendum, quam ſi ipſum, eumdemque et Patrem et Filium et Spiritum Sanctum dicat. - - - - Numerum et diſpoſitionem Trinitatis diviſionem præſumunt Trinitatis. - - - Itaque duos et tres jam jactitant a nobis prædicari, ſe vero unius Dei cultores præſumunt, quaſi non et unitas irrationaliter collecta, hæreſim faciat, et Trinitas rationaliter expenſa veritatem conſtituat. Monarchiam* (inquiunt) *tenemus.* cap. v. p. 637. But to paſs on to more explicit proofs, in chap. x. p. 680. Tertullian thus expreſſes the ſentiments of the Monarchians: *Neque Pater idem et Filius ut ſint ambo unus et utrumque alter, quod vaniſſimi iſti Monarchiani volunt. Ipſe ſe, inquiunt, Filium ſibi fecit.* Indeed, that there was nothing repugnant or abſurd in this opinion, they pretended to demonſtrate by

CENT. II. Praxeas.

publicly accuſed thereof at Rome, he put on the appearance of conceſſion, and, in a recantation which

the example of a virgin's bringing forth without having known man. *Ergo, inquiunt, difficile non fuit Deo, ipſum ſe et Patrem et Filium facere, adverſus traditam formam rebus humanis. Nam et ſterilem parere contra naturam difficile Deo non fuit, ſicut nec virginem.* Now theſe things, unleſs I am altogether deceived, can be underſtood after no other manner than this: The Deity, who is, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe of the word, One, put on, in ſome ſort a different form, and aſſumed a different mode of exiſting and acting, when, joining himſelf to Chriſt, he took the name of a Son, and, under that character, conveyed inſtruction to the human race. *Deus fecit ſe ſibi Filium:* for, being poſſeſſed of infinite power, he can eaſily vary his eſſence at pleaſure. The very paſſages of the New Teſtament, moreover, by which Praxeas endeavoured to uphold his dogma, ſeem to demonſtrate that it ought to be expounded in the way that I have pointed out. *Sed,* ſays Tertullian, cap. xx. p. 651. *argumentationibus eorum adhuc retundendis opera præbenda eſt. - - - - Nam ſicut in veteribus nihil aliud tenent quam, ego Deus, et alius præter me non eſt, ita in Evangelio reſponſionem Domini ad Philippum tuentur: ego et Pater unum ſumus; et, qui me viderit, videt et Patrem: et ego in Patre et Pater in me. His tribus capitulis totum inſtrumentum utriuſque teſtamenti volunt cedere:* which words, whoever ſhall adduce, by way of doing away all diſtinction between the Father and the Son, muſt neceſſarily hold that there is no difference whatever between the Father and the Son, except the mode or form of exiſting and acting. But this interpretation of the Praxean dogma is oppoſed by certain other paſſages in Tertullian, wherein he expreſsly intimates it to have been the opinion of his adverſary, that the title of Son, as given to Chriſt, ought not to be conſidered as the name of the Deity reſiding in Chriſt, but of his human nature; that the Deity himſelf, who is termed the Father, united to himſelf the Man Chriſt; and that this ſame Man was denominated the Son of God in conſequence of his having been begotten by the Deity of the Virgin Mary; a way of thinking not at all to be reconciled with his having taught, that what was divine in Chriſt was a certain form or mode of the Divine Nature to which the Deity gave the title of *Son,* by way of diſtinguiſhing it from that other form or mode which is termed *the Father.*

Let

which he wrote and publiſhed, profeſſed his entire acquieſcence in the catholic ſentiments reſpecting

CENT. II.

Praxeas.

Let us hear Tertullian himſelf, cap. xxvii. p. 659. *undique obducti diſtinctione Patris et Filii* (that is, borne down and overwhelmed by the words of the ſacred volume, in which expreſs diſtinction is made between the Father and the Son) *quam, manente conjunctione, diſponimus ut ſolis et radii, et fontis et fluvii, per individuum tamen numerum duorum et trium; aliter eam ad ſuam nihilominus ſententiam interpretari conantur ut æque in una perſona utrumque diſtinguant, Patrem et Filium, dicentes Filium carnem eſſe, id eſt, Hominem, id eſt, Jeſum; Patrem autem Spiritum* (meaning the ſoul, if I miſtake not), *id eſt, Deum, id eſt, Chriſtum. Et qui unum eumdemque contendunt Patrem et Filium, jam incipiunt dividere illos potius quam unare. Si enim alius eſt Jeſus, alius Chriſtus, alius erit Filius, alius Pater, quia Filius Jeſus, et Pater Chriſtus. Talem Monarchiam apud Valentinum fortaſſis didicerunt, duos facere Jeſum et Chriſtum.* Agreeably to this opinion, Praxeas maintained *Patrem paſſum eſſe in Chriſto*, or, as he preferred expreſſing it, *compaſſum eſſe cum Filio*, or, with the Man Jeſus. Tertullian, cap. xxix. p. 662. obſerves, *Ergo nec compaſſus eſt Pater Filio; ſic enim directam blaſphemiam in Patrem veriti, diminui eam hoc modo ſperant, concedentes jam Patrem & Filium duos eſſe: ſi Filius quidem patitur, Pater vero compatitur. Stulti & in hoc. Quid eſt enim compati quam cum alio pati? - - - Times dicere paſſibilem quem dicis compaſſibilem.* From which paſſage, by the bye, it is apparent how the followers of Praxeas came to be termed *Patripaſſians*, as alſo, that, by this appellation, no ſort of injury was done them, as certain of the learned have ſuppoſed. Thoſe who deny that the title of Patripaſſians could with propriety be aſſigned to them, do ſo under the impreſſion that theſe people believed the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to be three forms or modes of the divine nature; which, it is plain, muſt be at the leaſt very uncertain, from what we have above remarked. In addition, then, to thoſe remarks, if this title be taken into the account, I think not a doubt can well be entertained but that the latter of the two expoſitions above given of the Praxean dogma muſt be the right one. We may, therefore, conſider Praxeas as having maintained, I. That the Deity is in the ſtricteſt ſenſe an individual Being, altogether uncompounded and indiviſible. II. That this Being is in holy writ termed the Father. III. That this ſame in-

CENT. II. Praxeas.

ſpecting the Divine Nature. Upon paſſing over afterwards into Africa, however, he again ſtood forth

dividual Being formed for himſelf a Son in the Man Jeſus. IV. That he coaleſced, in one Perſon, with ſuch Man, his Son. V. That when this Man, his Son, ſuffered, he, the Father, ſuffered with him. VI. That whenever our Saviour, therefore, is termed the Son of God, this title muſt be conſidered as applying merely to his human nature. What the opinion of Praxeas was reſpecting the Holy Spirit is no where expreſsly pointed out by Tertullian. It may readily, however, be conceived, from the nature of his diſcipline, that he muſt have regarded it as a ſort of ray or virtue of the Father, *i. e.* the Deity. Whether Tertullian, moreover, who, as we have ſeen, gives two different expoſitions of the Praxean dogma, did not at the firſt ſufficiently comprehend its nature and force, and was too precipitate in applying to the Divine Nature the ſaying of the Monarchians, *Deus ipſe ſe ſibi Filium fecit:* or whether the Monarchians, upon finding themſelves driven, as it were, into a corner by the multitude of paſſages in holy writ, in which a clear diſtinction is made between the Father and the Son, forſook their former opinion, and had recourſe to that other which acquired for them the denomination of Patripaſſians, muſt of neceſſity be left undetermined. But now another queſtion ſuggeſts itſelf. Since it is certain that Praxeas did not conſider the eternal Son of God, or any mode of the Divine Nature under the name of a Son, to have been reſident in the Man Chriſt, but believed the whole Father, or the Deity, to have taken up his abode in the Son of God, that is, in the Man formed by God, in what way are we to underſtand what he ſays of the aſſociation of the Father with the Man Jeſus? Did he, by the title of the Father, mean to be underſtood as deſignating the very Perſon of the Father or Deity, or merely a certain power, or efficiency, as ſome term it, of God the Father? Almoſt every one leans to the former opinion, and I think not without reaſon, if any faith is to be placed in Tertullian, who is the only author from whom any information, as to this dogma of Praxeas, is to be derived in the preſent day; for, in a variety of paſſages, this writer repreſents his adverſary as having maintained that the Father was born and ſuffered on the croſs; nay, he adduces the Monarchians themſelves as in a certain degree acknowledging this, inaſmuch as they pronounced the Father to have

forth the avowed patron of the doctrine which he had abjured at Rome, and fought and obtained

have ſuffered together with the Son; an idea, which, if I am poſſeſſed of the leaſt penetration, the followers of Praxeas could never have entertained, had they imagined that it was merely a certain power or virtue of the Father that was preſent in the Son. For how could a certain divine power or efficiency, communicated to the Son for a time, have ſuffered and been crucified with him? Mich. Le Quien, however, the learned editor of Damaſcene's works, would rather have us believe *Praxeam cenſuiſſe Dominum Jeſum ſola Deitatis efficientia imbutum fuiſſe, non autem eſſe perſonam Patris, quæ in Deitate et humanitate ſubſtitiſſet ut Pater proprie paſſus et crucifixus diceretur.* Adnot. ad Damaſcen. *Lib. de Hæreſibus*, tom. i. p. 90. In ſupport of this interpretation, however, the learned writer adduces nothing but that one paſſage of Tertullian, cap. xxvii. p. 659. juſt above cited, in which he repreſents the Monarchians as maintaining *Patrem eſſe Spiritum Jeſu, id eſt, Deum.* But how, from this paſſage, any thing like that which he takes to be the true expoſition of the Praxean dogma is to be ſupported, I muſt confeſs myſelf utterly at a loſs to comprehend. The learned Pet. Weſſeling, therefore, found but little difficulty in overthrowing this new interpretation of the Monarchian tenets, and upholding the ancient one by numerous citations from Tertullian. See his *Probabilia*, cap. xxvi. p. 223 & ſeq. Franeq 1731, 8vo. My own ſentiments as to this matter are already given. If Tertullian is deſerving of attention, the dogma of the Monarchians admits of no other interpretation than what has commonly been given to it, and which the reader will find ſpecified above. I would be far, however, from diſſembling, that it may be a matter of ſome doubt how far Tertullian, whoſe treatiſe againſt Praxeas was obviouſly the production of a mind, hoſtile, perturbed, and boiling with indignation, is to be relied upon for having given us an ingenuous, ample, and faithful expoſition of the opinions of his adverſary. By accident I met with a notable paſſage in Juſtin Martyr, *Dial. cum Tryphone*, p. 371, 372. edit. Jebbian. in which he obſerves, that amongſt the Chriſtians of his time, there were ſome who maintained that the word of God, or the Son, was merely a certain power or virtue of the Father, and which could in no wiſe be ſeparated from the Father; as the light of the ſun upon the earth is not

CENT. II.

tained many adherents from amongſt the people. It does not, however, appear that he became the parent of a particular ſect.

Theodotus and Artemon.

LXIX. Juſt about the ſame period, or ſome ſhort time before, the Catholic doctrine reſpecting Chriſt and the exiſtence of three perſons in the divine nature was aſſailed after a different manner by one Theodotus, who had paſſed over to Rome from Conſtantinople, and practiſed the

not to be diſunited from that which ſhines in the heavens; that ſuch divine virtue had manifeſted itſelf in many different ways, and hence had acquired a variety of names, being ſometimes termed an Angel, ſometimes a Glory, at other times a man, and, at others the Word; that God emitted this virtue at his will, and again at his will recalled it: γινώσκω τινὰς φάσκειν τὴν δύναμιν τὴν παρὰ τὸ πατρὸς τῶν ὅλων φανεῖσαν - - - - ἄγγελον καλεῖσθαι ἐν τῇ πρὸς ἀνθρώπους προόδῳ. *Scio eſſe qui dicant virtutem a Patre rerum omnium provenientem, Angelum vocari cum ad homines progreditur:* δόξαν δὲ ἐπειδὴ ἐν φαντασίᾳ φαίνεται. *Gloriam vero, cum in viſione quadam exhibetur.* ἄνδρα δὲ ποτὲ καὶ ἄνθρωπον καλεῖσθαι ἐπειδὴ ἐν μορφαῖς τοιαύταις φαίνεται. *Virum autem et hominem nominari quando in formis ejuſmodi* (namely in the form of a man, or a human being) *conſpicitur.* καὶ λογον καλοῦσιν, ἐπειδὴ καὶ τὰς τοῦ πατρὸς ὁμιλίας φέρει τοῖς ἀνθρώποις. *Verbum appellari eam quod patris ſermones ad homines perferat.* ἀχώριστον τοῦ πατρὸς ταυτην τὴν δύναμιν ὑπάρχειν, ὅπερ τρόπον τὸ τοῦ ἡλίου φῶς ἐπὶ γῆς εἶναι ἀχώριστον ὄντος τοῦ ἡλίου ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ. *Virtutem autem illam a patre nullo modo disjungi poſſe, quemamodum ſolis lux in terris a ſole qui in cælo eſt ſegregari nequit.* Ὁ πατὴρ, ὅταν βούληται, δυναμιν αυτου προπεδαν ποιεῖ. καὶ ὅταν βούληται, παλιν ἀναγέλλει εἰς ἑαυτὸν. *Pater cum vult, efficit ut hæc ejus virtus proſiliat, & cum vult, eamdem ad ſeipſum retrahit.* Now thoſe who taught a doctrine like this, muſt neceſſarily have denied all real diſtinction of perſons in the divine nature, and believed the divine nature of Chriſt to have been merely a virtue or ray ſent forth for a while from the eternal light of the father. To this deſcription of Chriſtians it is not impoſſible that Praxeas might belong, and that having, with a view in ſome meaſure to diſguiſe his tenets, expounded them differently at different times, Tertullian was prevented from attaining to any thing like an exact or preciſe knowledge of them.

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art of a tanner, but was, notwithſtanding, a man of no mean proficiency in letters [*n*]. This hereſiarch denied altogether the divinity of Chriſt, refuſing to acknowledge in him any other kind of perſonal excellence than that of his corporeal frame having been divinely begotten [*o*]. The ſame doctrine is ſaid to have been

CENT. II. Theodotus and Artemon.

[*n*] Reſpecting Theodotus and Artemon, there is a long quotation given by Euſebius in his *Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory*, lib. v. cap. xxviii. from an ancient writer whoſe name is not mentioned. But neither from this, nor from Epiphanius, nor Theodoret, nor any other of the ancient hæreſiologiſts can we obtain a full and ſatisfactory account of theſe men and their opinions.

[*o*] Theodotus, as is related much at large by Epiphanius, *Hæreſ.* liv. cap. i, ii, iii. p. 464. & ſeq. and in a ſhorter way by Tertullian, Auguſtine, and Philaſter, being called in queſtion at Conſtantinople on account of his religion, abjured his faith in Chriſt, and when he was ſharply reproached with this by the Chriſtians of Rome, to which city he had fled for refuge, he, by the excuſe which he offered, plunged ſtill deeper into ſin. For he denied himſelf to have committed any offence at all againſt God, inaſmuch as Chriſt, whom he had denied, was nothing more than a mere man. That this account ſhould have been invented there is no reaſon whatever for believing. We are not however furniſhed by it with any thing like a perſpicuous or ſatisfactory view of this hereſiarch's ſentiments reſpecting Chriſt; nor are the ancient writers agreed in their expoſition of his tenets on this ſubject. Epiphanius ſtates him to have maintained that Jeſus was begotten according to the ſame law by which all other mortals are produced, namely, of the ſeed of man. But the ancient author of the *Catalogue of Heretics*, annexed to Tertullian's preſcriptions, and with whom Theodoret agrees, ſays, that Theodotus did indeed regard Chriſt as a mere man, but then as a man that had been begotten of a virgin by the Holy Spirit. And to this teſtimony learned men are diſpoſed to give more credit than to Epiphanius, a writer of no great weight, and far from being correct in his account of heretical opinions. But if the inference be juſt to which learned men have been led by the ancient author of the *Little Labyrinth*, a work written in oppoſition to the Theodotians and

CENT. II.

Theodotus and Artemon.

been maintained at Rome, either ſome ſhort time before, or elſe within a little while after Theodotus, by one Artemas or Artemon, from whom the *Artemonites* took their denomina-

and Artemonites, and from which a citation is given by Euſebius, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. v. cap. 28. namely, that the doctrine of Artemon was the ſame with that of Theodotus, the correctneſs of even this laſt ſtatement will admit of being called in queſtion. For not to notice that there are not wanting thoſe who conceive the opinions of Artemon to have correſponded with thoſe of Paul of Samoſata or Arius, we are told by Gennadius of Marſeilles *de Dogmat. Eccleſiaſt.* cap. iii. p. 4. edit. Elmenhorſt. that Artemon held, *Chriſtum divinitatis initium naſcendo accepiſſe.* He did not therefore deny Chriſt to be God and man, but conceived him to have been ſtyled God in conſequence of God's having aſſociated himſelf with the man Chriſt from the very commencement of his exiſtence; which opinion more nearly correſponds with that which, as we have above ſhewn, was entertained by Praxeas, than with that which is commonly attributed to Theodotus. Artemon's opinion, we mean, was, that a certain divine power, not a perſon, united itſelf to the man Chriſt who was born of a virgin, and that in conſequence of this aſſociation of the divinity with the human nature of Chriſt, he who was a man was in the ſacred writings alſo termed God, and might be ſtyled God. But to confeſs the truth, it appears to me to be much leſs certain than is commonly imagined, that Theodotus and Artemon entertained one and the ſame opinion reſpecting Chriſt. Theodoret clearly makes a diſtinction between the Theodotians and the Artemonites; and although the author of the *Little Labyrinth*, as quoted by Euſebius, aſſociates them together in his work, and directs his arguments againſt them jointly, it is yet far from being clear that there were no points of diſſenſion between them. This much certainly they had in common, that they denied all real diſtinction of perſons in the Godhead, and conſequently would not admit that a divine perſon had united himſelf with Chriſt. Wherefore they might well be encountered in one and the ſame work, and with one and the ſame ſet of arguments. But a community of ſentiments as to theſe particulars by no means rendered it impoſſible that they ſhould differ in their opinions reſpecting Chriſt.

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tion [*p*]. Towards the close of the century Theodotus was condemned by the Roman bishop Victor; and it should seem not unlikely that Artemon and his disciples were excommunicated by the same prelate.—The notices that have reached us respecting these sects, both of which should seem to have quickly disappeared, are but scanty. The circumstance of all others most deserving of attention in respect to them is, that the Theodotians and Artemonites are said to have set a great value on philosophy and geometry, indeed more than well comported with a proper respect for religion and the sacred writings [*q*]. In truth the principal fruit derived from the introduction of a taste for the Grecian philosophy amongst the Christians was, that by the application of its precepts to the mysteries of religion, birth was given to a variety of opinions and disputes respecting the manner in which these latter ought to be understood.

CENT. II.

Theodotus and Artemon.

LXX. A station in point of time somewhat prior to these last-mentioned corrupters of the Catholic doctrine respecting the divine nature

Hermogenes.

[*p*] Whether it was Theodotus or Artemon that first disturbed the church by the propagation of an erroneous doctrine, is one of those subjects on which the learned are divided, with scarcely any preponderance of argument on either side. The reader, if he please, may pass over a question so uncertain and minute; but should any one wish to know and weigh the arguments that are adduced on either side, he may have recourse to Wesseling, who in his *Probabilia*, cap. xxi. p. 172—180, having diligently pondered the whole of them, coincides with those who consider Theodotus as having preceded Artemon.

[*q*] With regard to this there is given us by Eusebius, *Histor. Eccles.* lib. v. cap. xxviii. p. 197. & seq. a passage from an ancient writer which is well deserving of attention, although the reprehension it conveys may be thought, perhaps, somewhat too severe.

and

CENT. II.

Hermogenes.

and the Saviour of the human race, appears to belong to Hermogenes, a painter by profeſſion, but at the ſame time a man of a ſubtile genius, and a philoſopher, whom we find denounced by Tertullian as a heretic of the firſt claſs, although he ſeems never to have become the parent of any particular ſect, but to have paſſed the whole of his days in undiſturbed communion with the church [r]. Hermogenes was a corrupter of the catholic doctrine reſpecting the origin of the world. For ſince he conſidered matter as the ſource or fountain of all evil, he felt it incum-

[r] Amongſt the works of Tertullian that are extant, there is a vehement philippic of his againſt Hermogenes, poſſeſſing ſome degree of merit it is true in point of ingenuity and eloquence, but written in ſtyle at once difficult and obſcure. In this work Tertullian encounters merely the tenets of Hermogenes reſpecting matter and the origin of the world. The opinion of the latter concerning the nature of the ſoul had been attacked by him in another book now loſt, which he notices in his Treatiſe *de Anima*, cap. i. as intituled *de Cenſu Animæ*. In this contention with Hermogenes, Tertullian is remarkably abuſive, although he does not pretend to deny that his adverſary was a man of genius, eloquence, and ſound underſtanding as to the leading principles and tenets of the Chriſtian religion; which will appear the more ſurpriſing to thoſe who are aware that the Chriſtians, in the age of which we are treating, were accuſtomed to deal more mildly with thoſe who conſidered matter as having exiſted with the Deity from all eternity, and the world as having been compounded thereof. But it was not ſo much his errors as his morals, which were quite in oppoſition to the diſcipline of Montanus, that rendered Hermogenes hateful in the eyes of Tertullian, who, as every one knows, was an ardent Montaniſt. For he had often times been married, a thing held impious by Montanus, and in the exerciſe of his profeſſion had diſregarded the rigid rules laid down by this preceptor. *Præterea*, ſays Tertullian, cap. i. p. 265. *pingit illicite, nubit aſſidue; legem Dei in libidinem defendit, in artem contemnit. . . . totus adulter, & prædicationis & carnis, ſiquidem et nubentium contagio foetet.*

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bent on him to deny that the Deity had created matter out of nothing.—This involved him in the neceſſity of maintaining that the matter of which God formed the world was eternal, although ſubject to his power [*s*]. Under the denomination

CENT. II. Hermogenes.

[*s*] Hermogenes was not led to deny that matter had been created out of nothing by the all-powerful will of the Deity in conſequence of a belief that the thing was altogether impoſſible, but from his taking it for granted that matter was the ſole fountain of every thing vicious and evil. —For he is brought forward by Tertullian, at the commencement of his book, as arguing after the following manner: If God made matter, he made it either of himſelf, or out of nothing. Either of theſe ſuppoſitions is abſurd. If God made matter of himſelf, he could not have been a ſimple, indiviſible, immutable being.—If he created it out of nothing, he could not have been good, or ſuperlatively excellent. For matter is intrinſecally vicious and corrupt. *Proinde*, (we give Tertullian's very words) *ex nihilo non potuiſſe eum facere* (*i. e.* matter), *ſic contendit, bonum et optimum definiens dominum, qui bona atque optima tam velit facere quam ſit.* His concluſion therefore was, that no alternative was left us but to believe that matter was coëval with the Deity, having exiſted together with him from all eternity. From this mode of reaſoning it is manifeſt that Hermogenes conſidered the production of matter, as, to uſe the language of philoſophers, *phyſically poſſible*, but as every way unworthy of the Deity, and therefore *morally impoſſible*, and that this his opinion was founded on the perſuaſion that matter was the ſeat and origin of every thing evil. Since the error then of Hermogenes reſpecting the fabrication of the world from eternal matter proceeded entirely from this opinion reſpecting the origin of evil, Tertullian ought to have made the cauſe or origin of evil the chief ground of his contention with him, and to have ſhewn that evil was derived, not from matter, but from other ſources. This being once proved, the erroneous notion of Hermogenes reſpecting the creation of the world, muſt of neceſſity have fallen to the ground. But omitting every thing of this ſort, Tertullian at once commences a furious attack on the dogma of his adverſary reſpecting the eternity of matter; that is, he paſſes over in ſilence the root and principle of the error, and contents himſelf with attacking merely a conſectary dedu-

CENT. II.

Hermogenes.

denomination of the world he included not only corporeal ſubſtances but mind and ſpirit, which he conſidered as having been in like manner produced by the Deity from vicious and eternal matter [*t*]. As to any other points of Chriſtian belief

cible from it. To this obſervation we may add another no leſs neceſſary to the right underſtanding of the doctrine of Hermogenes. Although he conſidered matter as coëval with the Deity, he nevertheleſs maintained that the Deity had from all eternity ruled over it, and held it in ſubjection, a circumſtance which renders his opinion much more tolerable than that of certain others, who either aſſigned to matter, which they believed to be eternal, a peculiar ruler diſtinct from the Deity, or elſe contended that before the foundation of the world the Deity and matter had no connection whatever. That the opinion of Hermogenes was really ſuch as I here ſtate it to have been is placed out of all diſpute by one of the arguments which he brings forward in proof of the eternity of matter. The argument I allude to is this: God hath been Lord from all eternity; therefore from all eternity there muſt have exiſted matter ſubject to his dominion. But let us hear the expoſition which Tertullian himſelf gives us of this argument, cap. iii. p. 866. *Adjicit & aliud. Deum ſemper Deum etiam Dominum fuiſſe, numquam non Deum. Nullo porro modo potuiſſe illum ſemper Dominum haberi, ſicut et ſemper Deum, ſi non fuiſſet aliquid retro ſemper, cujus ſemper Dominus haberetur: fuiſſe itaque materiam ſemper Deo Domino.*

[*t*] It is certain from what is ſaid by Tertullian in his book *de Anima*, cap. i, and other teſtimonies, that Hermogenes did not attribute a more noble origin to men's ſouls than to their bodies. No doubt he might conceive that matter of a more ſubtile kind was uſed by the Deity in the formation of ſouls, but ſtill he did not deny them to have been compoſed of matter. And to me the reaſon eaſily ſuggeſts itſelf why Hermogenes ſhould have thought thus. Perceiving that ſouls were ſubject to depraved propenſities and appetites, and at the ſame time being fully perſuaded that every thing evil and vicious was generated of matter, and had its reſidence in matter, he could not but conclude, that the ſouls of men no leſs than their bodies were framed or compoſed of matter. Whether he entertained the ſame opinion reſpecting the good angels is not to be known at this day. But that he conceived the evil angels together with

belief he appears to have attempted no innovation whatever [*u*]. CENT. II.

The hereſy of Hermogenes.

with their leader or chief to have been formed out of matter, and that they would, at a future day, again be reſolved into matter, is recorded by Theodoret, *Fabular Hæret.* lib. 1. cap. xix. p. 207. tom. iv. opp. In what way he contrived to reconcile theſe principles with the tenets of the Chriſtians at large, reſpecting the immortality of the ſoul, the angels, and other things, it might poſſibly be in our power to aſcertain were we in poſſeſſion of the book written againſt him by Tertullian, *de Cenſu Animæ.*

[*u*] Tertullian, although he was moſt intimately acquainted with the tenets of Hermogenes, and regarded him with an implacable hatred, yet never once accuſes him of entertaining any other errors than thoſe above noticed reſpecting matter, the creation of the world, and the nature of ſouls. What is of ſtill greater importance, this vehement writer acknowledges, in expreſs terms, that the dogma of his adverſary reſpecting Chriſt, the corner-ſtone of all religion, was ſound and orthodox. *Chriſtum*, ſays he, cap. i. p. 265. *Dominum non alium videtur aliter cognoſcere* (that is, he appears to entertain a belief reſpecting Chriſt ſimilar to that of other Chriſtians) *alium tamen facit, quem aliter cognoſcit:* (*i. e.* what he profeſſes reſpecting Chriſt, however, in words, he enervates and renders of no avail by his opinions) *immo totum quod eſt Deus aufert, nolens illum ex nihilo univerſa feciſſe. A Chriſtianis enim converſus ad philoſophos, - - ſumpſit a Stoicis materiam cum Domino ponere, quæ ipſa ſemper fuerit, neque nata, neque facta, nec initium habens omnino, nec finem, ex qua Dominus omnia poſtea fecerit.* Theſe charges in fact, although moſt invidiouſly brought forward, inſtead of criminating the perſon againſt whom they are adduced, ſerve clearly to demonſtrate his innocence. And I therefore cannot agree with thoſe of the learned who ſuppoſe that Hermogenes, whom Clement of Alexandria in his *Eclogæ Propheticæ*, § lvi. p. 1002, reports to have taught that Chriſt depoſited his body in the ſun, was one and the ſame with the painter of whom we have been treating, who contended for the eternity of matter, although in ſupport of this their opinion they may urge the authority of Theodoret. That Hermogenes alſo againſt whom Theophilus of Antioch and Origen are ſtated by Theodoret to have written, I take to have been a different man from him to whom our attention has been directed. Poſſibly amongſt the Valentinians or ſome others of the Gnoſtics there might have been a man of this name that attained to ſome degree of celebrity in conſequence of his broaching certain new opinions.

CENT. II.

Controverſy reſpecting the Paſchal obſervances.

LXXI. In addition to theſe numerous and great diſputes, involving the very eſſentials of religion, there aroſe towards the cloſe of this century, between the Chriſtians of Aſia Minor and thoſe of other parts, particularly ſuch as were of the Roman church, a violent contention reſpecting a matter that related merely to the form of religion or divine worſhip; a thing, in itſelf, truly of light moment, but in the opinion of the diſputants, of very great importance. The affair was this. The Aſiatic Chriſtians were accuſtomed to celebrate their paſſover, that is the Paſchal feaſt which it was, at this time, uſual with the Chriſtians to obſerve in commemoration of the inſtitution of the Lord's Supper and the ſubſequent death of the Redeemer, on the fourteenth day of the firſt Jewiſh month; that is to ſay, at the ſame time when the Jews ate their Paſchal lamb; occaſioning thereby an interruption in the faſt of the great week. This cuſtom they ſtated themſelves to have derived from the apoſtles Philip and John, as well as from many other characters of the very firſt eminence. But the reſt of the Chriſtians, as well in Aſia as in Europe and Africa, deemed it irreligious to terminate the faſt of the great week before the day devoted to the commemoration of our Saviour's return to life, and therefore deferred the celebration of their paſſover or paſchal feaſt, until the night immediately preceding the anniverſary of Chriſt's reſurrection from the dead. And for their acting thus, the Roman Chriſtians, in particular, alleged the authority of the apoſtles Paul and Peter. This difference gave birth to another of ſtill greater moment. For as the Aſiatic Chriſtians always commemorated our Lord's return to life on the third day after their partaking

taking of the Paſchal ſupper, it was a circumſtance liable to occur, and the which, no doubt, frequently did occur, that they kept the anniverſary of Chriſt's reſurrection, which afterwards acquired, and continues ſtill to retain the denomination of *Paſcha* or Eaſter, on a different day from the firſt day of the week, or that which is commonly termed *Sunday*; whereas the other Chriſtians, as well thoſe of the Eaſt as of the Weſt, made it a rule to hold their annual celebration of our bleſſed Saviour's triumph over the grave on no other day than that on which it actually occurred, namely on the firſt day of the week [*v*].

CENT. II.

Controverſy reſpecting the Paſchal obſervances.

LXXII. In

[*v*] Ancient writers, at the head of whom we may place Euſebius, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. v. cap. xxiii. are very negligent and obſcure in the accounts they give us of the nature and cauſes of this great controverſy reſpecting the time of keeping Eaſter, which had nearly been productive of a moſt deplorable ſchiſm. Hence the whole claſs of more recent authors who have treated of the ſubject, and none more than thoſe who in eſtimating the force and meaning of ancient terms, have permitted themſelves to be led away by modern notions, and are not over-burthened with information as to the manners and cuſtoms of early times, have, in their explanation of it fallen into various errors, and been by no means happy in unfolding the true grounds of the diſpute. The common opinion is, that the Aſiatic Chriſtians were reprehended by the reſt for celebrating the anniverſary of our Lord's reſurrection at the ſame time that the Jews were accuſtomed to eat their paſſover. But this is altogether a miſtake, and a thing with which they are never once reproached by any ancient authors. And indeed, to be convinced how little foundation there could be for ſuch an idea, we need only aſk ourſelves what, I will not ſay reaſon, but ſemblance or ſhadow of a reaſon, could poſſibly have induced theſe Chriſtians to commemorate the reſurrection of our Lord at the time of his having been put to death? Moſt certain it is that Chriſt's return to life did not take place on the fourteenth day, when the Jews, agreeably to the in-

CENT. II.

LXXII. In the courſe of this century attempts were

Controverſy reſpecting the Paſchal obſervances.

junctions of their law are accuſtomed to celebrate their paſſover, but two days afterwards, at the leaſt, that is to ſay, on the ſixteenth, or perhaps even ſo late as the ſeventeenth day. Nor were the Aſiatic Chriſtians ignorant of this; nor did they pretend to deny it. What then could poſſibly have impelled them to be guilty of ſuch an egregious incongruity as to determine that the grand annual celebration of Chriſt's reſurrection ſhould be obſerved on the fourteenth day of the month, a day on which they were well appriſed that ſuch reſurrection did not take place? There are extant moreover, in an epiſtle written by Polycrates the biſhop of Epheſus in defence of the Aſiatic cuſtom, and which is in part preſerved by Euſebius, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. v. cap. xxiv. I ſay, there are extant in this epiſtle certain paſſages from which it is clear that no diſpute whatever exiſted as to the time of celebrating the anniverſary of the reſurrection. Polycrates ſays, that he and the reſt of the Aſiatic biſhops, in keeping the paſſover, on the fourteenth day of the month, conformed themſelves to the Goſpel, the the common rule of faith & religion to Chriſtians; ἐτήρησαν τὴν ἡμέραν τῆς τεσσαρεσκαιδεκάτης τοῦ πάσχα κατὰ τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον, μηδὲν παρεκβαίνοντες, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸν κανόνα τῆς πίστεως ἀκολουθοῦντες. *Servarunt* (thoſe holy men) *diem Paſchæ quarta decima luna juxta evangelium, nihil omnino variantes, ſed regulam fidei conſtanter ſequentes.* In the ſequel Polycrates again appeals to the Holy Scriptures, and, relying on their authority, concludes his diſputation in the words of the apoſtles, *Acts*, v. 29. "We ought to obey God rather than men." The Aſiatics, therefore, we ſee, contended that they conformed to the example of Chriſt, as propounded in the Goſpel. Nor did their adverſaries pretend to deny that the Goſpel, and the example of Chriſt as held forth in the Goſpel, were in favour of the Aſiatic rule. What they contended for was, that in things of this ſort, there was no neceſſity for cloſely and literally adhering to the rule of the Goſpel, or the example of Chriſt as exhibited in the Goſpel. If, ſaid they, (as appears from the *Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory* of Socrates Scholaſticus, lib. v. cap. xxii) the days and months, when Chriſt did any particular thing are not, in the leaſt, to be deviated from by thoſe who would imitate his example, it is neceſſary that none of thoſe circumſtances ſhould be omitted with which his celebration of the paſſover was accompanied; it ought therefore to be eaten in an upper chamber,

were not unfrequently made to put an end to this

CENT. II.

Controverſy reſpecting the Paſchal obſervances.

chamber, &c." Now what are we to gather from all this? Do we find it ſtated in the Goſpel, that Chriſt aroſe from the dead on the fourteenth day of the month, or that this was the day ſet apart for the commemoration of that event? Did Chriſt, when he partook of the paſchal ſupper with his diſciples, celebrate the feſtival of his reſurrection? Nothing of this kind, as every one well knows, is to be met with in our Lord's hiſtory. It is plain then, that what the Aſiatics contended for muſt have been this, that the day on which they were accuſtomed to hold their paſchal feaſt was the ſame with that on which it appears from the Goſpel that Chriſt, whoſe example it is incumbent on all Chriſtians to follow, celebrated the paſſover with his diſciples. The diſpute therefore, between them and the reſt of the Chriſtians, had no relation to the day of Chriſt's reſurrection from the dead, but reſpected the holding of a paſchal ſupper ſimilar to that which was celebrated by Chriſt with his diſciples a ſhort time previous to his crucifixion. This common error reſpecting the feaſt of Chriſt's reſurrection having been celebrated by the Aſiatic Chriſtians on the ſame day that the Jews ate their paſſover, aroſe out of a miſtaken interpretation of the word *Paſcha*. Since the time of the Council of Nice this term has, for the moſt part, been conſidered as indicating that day on which our bleſſed Saviour aroſe from the dead, and on which it is uſual for us to commemorate this his triumph over death and the grave. But by the more early Chriſtians, previous to the Council of Nice, another meaning was annexed to it, it being made uſe of by them to deſignate the day on which Chriſt celebrated the paſſover and was offered up on the croſs, the true paſchal lamb, for the ſins of the human race. Of its bearing this ſignification numerous examples might be adduced, but I will content myſelf with giving merely two, by way of convincing thoſe who are but moderately informed on the ſubject of Chriſtian antiquities, that I am not without authority for what I thus ſtate. The firſt I ſhall take from Tertullian, the moſt celebrated Latin writer of this century, who, in his book, *de Oratione*, cap. xiv. p. 155. Opp. expreſſes himſelf in the following terms, *Sic et die Paſchæ, quo communis & quaſi publica jejunii Religio eſt, merito deponimus oſculum, nihil curantes de occultando quod cum omnibus faciamus.* Now, who does not perceive that by the word *Paſcha* we here ought to underſtand the day on which the Chriſtians were accuſtomed to commemorate our bleſſed Saviour's death? For on this day it was the univerſal practice,

CENT. II. this diſſenſion, which was found by ſad experience

Controverſy reſpecting the Paſchal obſervances.

throughout the whole Chriſtian church, to faſt; whereas on the anniverſary of Chriſt's reſurrection every kind of faſting was inhibited. In another place, *viz.* in his book *de Jejuniis*, cap. xiv. p. 712. Tertullian terms the whole week, which the Chriſtians commonly ſtyled the *great*, or *the holy* week, *Paſcha. Quamquam vos etiam ſabbatum ſi quando continuatis, numquam niſi in Paſcha*, (that is, on the Sabbath of that week in which the paſchal feaſt is celebrated in commemoration of Chriſt's death and ſufferings) *jejunandum putatis*. By other writers alſo, we find the word *paſcha* uſed in this latter ſenſe. To the example of this very ancient Latin author, I ſubjoin that of a Greek writer of much more recent date, namely the author of the *Chronicon Paſchale*, edited amongſt the Byzantine hiſtorians, by Rader, and Du Cange; whence it appears, that even long ſubſequent to the Council of Nice the ancient notion attached to the term *Paſcha* had not become entirely extinct. This author at p. 8. of the Pariſian edition of his work by Du Cange moſt clearly applies the term *Paſcha* to a different day from that whereon the anniverſary of Chriſt's reſurrection is kept, and which we term *Paſcha* or Eaſter, and indicates by this word the day dedicated to the annual commemoration of our bleſſed Saviour's death. In memory of Chriſt, the true paſchal lamb, ſays he, κατ' ἐκατὸν ἐνιαυτὸν ἡ τῦ Θεῦ ἐκκλησια τὴν ἁγίαν τῦ πάσχα εὑρετὴν ἐπιτελεῖ, ἁπλανῶς τηρῦσα τῆς ιδ' τῦ πρώτυ μηνὸς τῆς σελήνης. *Quotannis eccleſia Dei ſanctum paſchatis feſtum celebrat, recte obſervata* xiv. *primi menſis Lunæ.* Καὶ εἰ μὲν ἐυρεθείη ἄυτη - - - - ἐν ἡμέρα κυριακῆ τὴν ἁγίαν τῆς ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστάσεως Χριστῦ τῦ Θεῦ ἡμων ἑορτὴν ἄγει. *Hac vero* (the fourteenth day of the month) *inventa, ſequenti Dominica ſanctum Chriſti Dei noſtri ex mortuis reſurrectioni feſtum peragit.* Many more paſſages of a ſimilar kind might be cited from this chronicle, but I paſs them over as unneceſſary. I will add, however, a notable paſſage from the epiſtle written by the Emperor Conſtantine the Great to the biſhops who could not attend the Council of Nice, and which is preſerved by Theodoret, *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. i. cap. ix. p. 627. The extract will be found to apply more immediately to the ſubject before us, and places it out of all diſpute that the controverſy between the Aſiatic and other Chriſtians reſpecting the paſchal ſeaſon, had no reference whatever to the day of Chriſt's reſurrection, but to that of his ſufferings and death. Περὶ τῆς ſays the Emperor, ἁγιωτάτης τῦ πάσχα ἡμέρας γενομένης ζητήσεως ἔδοξε κοινῆ γνώμη καλῶς ἔχειν, ἐπὶ μιᾶς ἡμεράς πάντας τὸ ἁπανταχῦ ἐπιτελεῖν. *De ſanctiſſimo Die Paſchæ*

rience to yield repeated occaſion for unchriſtian-like wranglings CENT. II.

Controverſy reſpecting the Paſchal obſervances.

chæ quum lis exorta eſſet (this was one and the ſame controverſy with that of which we are now treating, for after having lain dormant, it was renewed at the time of the Council of Nice, and was finally ſet at reſt by a decree of that aſſembly) *optimum factu communi ſententia* (of the Nicene fathers) *viſum eſt, uno eodemque tempore hunc omnes ubique gentium celebrare.* In what ſenſe it was meant that the term *Paſcha* ſhould be underſtood in this paſſage is ſhortly after rendered manifeſt by the emperor himſelf in the following words: ἔξεστι γὰρ τῇ ἐκείνων ἔθεσι ἀποβληθέντος ἀληθεστέρα τάξει, ἣν ἐν καιρῷ τῆς τοῦ παθους ἡμέρας περὶ τοῦ παρόντος ἐφυλάξαμεν, καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς μέλλοντας αἰῶνας τὴν τῆς ἐπιτηρήσεως ταύτης συμπλήρωσιν ἐγγίνεσθαι. *Fas enim eſt rejecta illorum* (the Jews) *conſuetudine, veriore inſtituto, quod circa diem paſſionis hactenus tenuimus, ejuſdem obſervationis uſum ad futura ſæcula propagari.* By *Paſcha*, therefore, the ſubject of their diſputation, it is plain was meant ἡμέρα τοῦ παθους, the day of our Lord's paſſion. Not being aware of this ancient ſignification of the word *Paſcha*, more recent writers, when they read of the Aſiatic Chriſtians having been involved in a controverſy with thoſe of Rome reſpecting the paſchal feaſt, were haſtily led to perſuade themſelves that the Aſiatic Chriſtians celebrated the anniverſary of Chriſt's reſurrection on the ſame day on which the Jews ate their Paſſover; underſtanding the word *Paſcha* according to its more recent ſenſe, and never adverting to the poſſibility of its having, in earlier times, borne a different one. The merit of firſt diſcovering this, however, does not properly belong to me. The perſon who firſt of any, as far as my information reaches, diſcovered that the common notion in regard to this celebrated controverſy reſpecting the paſchal ſeaſon was erroneous, was that illuſtrious member of the order of Jeſuits ſo diſtinguiſhed for his writings, the father Gabriel Daniel. See his *Diſſertation de la Diſcipline des quartodecimans pour la Celebration de la pague*, in the third volume of his *Recueil de divers ouvrages Philoſophiques, Theologiques, et Hiſtoriques.—Paris*, 1724, in 4to, p. 473—506. The ſame thing, if I well remember, is alſo noticed by Pet. Faydit in his notes to a ſermon preached on the feaſt of St. Polycarp*. This error was more-

* In a ſubſequent publication, Dr. Moſheim took an opportunity of ſtating that his memory had in this inſtance proved unfaithful, and that on a re-peruſal of Faydit's book, he found himſelf under the neceſſity of retracting the compliment which he had here paid to that writer's penetration.

CENT. II. wranglings and the moſt intricate and acrimonious

Controverſy reſpecting the Paſchal obſervances.

over ſubſequently adverted to in a *Programma* propounded in the univerſity of Gottingen on Eaſter-day, by that very profound and ingenious ſcholar Chriſtoph. Aug. Heuman, who ſeems not in the leaſt to have been aware of its having been previouſly detected by other people. Whiſton too, in the Memoirs of his Life and Writings, Lond. 1749, 8vo, tom. ii. p. 601. complains that no one appeared to be acquainted with the true grounds and cauſe of this Paſchal controverſy, and acknowledges that he himſelf was for a long time involved in ſimilar ignorance; but adds, that in his three Tracts, London, 1742, 8vo, he had unfolded the true nature of it from original authorities. Of theſe ſeveral works I regret to ſay that I have neither, juſt at this moment, within my reach, except that of Daniel, who, although he certainly diſcovers much information and judgment as to ſeveral particulars, yet in regard to many others has not, as it appears to me, attained exactly to a true ſtate of the queſtion. I will therefore myſelf make trial how far it may be poſſible to place the nature of this very obſcure controverſy in a juſt and perſpicuous point of view. (I.) The early Chriſtians, retaining as they did, not a few of the Jewiſh rites and ceremonies, were accuſtomed, after the manner of the Jews, to partake on a certain day of a Paſchal ſupper, and eat together a Paſchal lamb. This has been demonſtrated from various authorities, by Hen. Dodwell, in his work *on the Uſe of Frankincenſe in the Church.* At preſent I ſhall not occupy myſelf in regularly repeating ſuch demonſtration, inaſmuch as the truth of the thing will be rendered apparent by various circumſtances to which it will be neceſſary for me to advert in the courſe of this diſcuſſion. This cuſtom maintained its ground both in the eaſtern and the weſtern church for many ages. Amongſt the oriental Chriſtians, the Armenians, the Copts, and others, it prevails even at this day. By the Chriſtians of the weſt it has been gradually relinquiſhed: ſome obvious traces of it, however, are ſtill to be diſcerned even in Chriſtian Europe. The principal difference in fact is, that amongſt the European Chriſtians the celebration of this ſacred repaſt, which uſed formerly to take place in the churches or other places of public aſſembly, is now confined within the walls of private houſes. This repaſt the early Chriſtians were accuſtomed to diſtinguiſh by the Jewiſh denomination of *Paſcha*, and certainly not without ſome ſhew of reaſon, for in point of external form it correſponded very nearly with the *Paſcha*, or paſſover of the Jews. The repaſt

nious diſputes [*w*]. Under the reign of Antoninus CENT. II.

Controverſy reſpecting the Paſchal obſervances.

[*w*] The reader may conſult as to this Epiphanius in *Hæreſ. Audianorum*, lxx. §. ix. p. 821.

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repaſt itſelf was undoubtedly of Jewiſh origin, and might therefore well continue to be diſtinguiſhed by the ancient Jewiſh appellation. In the cauſes or reaſons for celebrating this repaſt, the Chriſtians and Jews were widely ſeparated from each other.——(II.) The cauſes or reaſons by which the Chriſtians were actuated in the celebration of this paſchal feaſt are not beyond the reach of diſcovery. In the firſt place they held themſelves bound to follow the example of our bleſſed Saviour, who, previouſly to his laying down his life for the ſalvation of the human race, celebrated the paſſover with his diſciples, and had thereby, as they thought, given his ſanction to this Jewiſh rite, and in a manner commended the obſervance of it to his diſciples. Secondly, it appeared to them, that the remembrance of the Holy Supper which our bleſſed Saviour inſtituted after his celebration of the paſſover, might be beſt preſerved in this way. Nor can there be any doubt but that they cloſed this their paſchal feaſt with the celebration of the Lord's ſupper. Laſtly, believing as they did on the authority of St. Paul, 1 Cor. v. 7. that the Paſchal lamb of the Jews was a type or figure of Chriſt's being offered up for the ſins of mankind, it appeared to them that there could be no better way of commemorating the Redeemer's ſacrifice, and bringing it, as it were, immediately before their eyes, than by celebrating that figurative repreſentation of it which God himſelf had preſcribed. This idea, moreover, of Chriſt's death having been preſigured in the ſlaughter of the Paſchal lamb, and the fruits of his death by the Paſchal feaſt, being deeply rooted in the minds of the early Chriſtians, occaſioned them, as we have above ſhewn by examples, to term the day devoted to the commemoration of our Saviour's death the Paſchal day.——(III.) The Chriſtians of Aſia Minor were accuſtomed to celebrate this ſacred feaſt, commemorative of the inſtitution of the Lord's ſupper and the death of Jeſus Chriſt, at the ſame time when the Jews ate their Paſchal lamb, namely, on the evening of the fourteenth day of the firſt month. For, as is clear from the words of Polycrates, biſhop of Epheſus, which we

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CENT. II.

ninus Pius, in particular about the middle of this century

Controverſy reſpecting the Paſchal obſervances.

juſt above cited from Euſebius, they conſidered the example of Chriſt as poſſeſſing the force of a law; and, as is equally manifeſt, they did not conceive our Saviour to have anticipated the paſſover, as is believed by many at this day, and particularly by the Greeks, but that the Paſchal lamb was eaten by him and his diſciples preciſely on the ſame day on which the Jews, conformably to the directions of the Moſaic ritual, were ever accuſtomed to eat theirs. Let us hear as to this Epiphanius, who, although he is very obſcure in his explication of the opinion of the *Quarta-decimans*, as thoſe were termed who celebrated their Paſchal feaſt at the ſame time with the Jews, yet intimates perſpicuouſly enough, that the matter in diſpute between them and the other Chriſtians reſpected the time of eating the Paſchal lamb. In *Hæreſ. L. Quarta-decim.* § ii. p. 420. he expreſſes himſelf after the following manner: πρῶτον γὰρ ἐν τῇ τεσσαρεισκαιδεκάτῃ τὸ πάσχα ἄγουσι, χρείαν ἔχουσι τὸ πρόβατον λαβεῖν ἀπὸ δεκάτης, καὶ τηρεῖν αὐτὸ ἕως τεσσαρεσκαιδεκάτης. - - - ἐὰν δὲ πρὸς ἑσπέραν τυθῇ τὸ πασχα ἡ αὐτὴ τεσσαρεισκαιδεκάτη ἐπιφώσκουσα ἐξ διατελεῖ ἡμέρας ἐν τῇ νηστείᾳ. *Primum enim ſi* (*Quarta-decimani*) *Paſcha die* xiv. *celebrant, neceſſe eſt ut Agnum jam die decimo adducant, atque ad diem decimum quartum* (*vivum*) *cuſtodiant. Quod ſi ad Veſperam Paſcha fuerit immolatum quod* xiv. *die illuceſcente geritur, ſex dies jejunio tribuendi ſunt.* In theſe words of Epiphanius there are ſome things which defy explanation, and Petavius himſelf, by the Latin tranſlation which he has given us of them, and which is in part erroneous, and in part imperfect, has tacitly acknowledged that he was unable to comprehend altogether what it was that Epiphanius meant to convey. I will however endeavour to ſeparate what is clear and apparent from what muſt of neceſſity remain involved in obſcurity. Firſt then it is manifeſt, that the diſpute with the Quarta-decimans was reſpecting the Paſchal feaſt and the Paſchal lamb, not the day for commemorating the reſurrection of our bleſſed Saviour from the dead. For in this paſſage the word *Paſcha*, in the firſt inſtance, evidently means the Paſchal feaſt, and in the ſecond the Paſchal lamb. Secondly, it is clear that the Quarta-decimans, like the Jews, ate their Paſchal lamb on the fourteenth day of the month. Thirdly, it is apparent that they took home this lamb in order to its undergoing the requiſite preparation,

century a ſerious diſcuſſion of the affair took place

Controverſy reſpecting the Paſchal obſervances.

tion, ſo early as the tenth day. Fourthly, it is obvious that they kept this lamb alive until the fourteenth day. Fifthly, it is plain that they ſlew this lamb, with certain ceremonies no doubt, on the evening of the fourteenth day. Whence it follows, Sixthly, that they ſolemnly feaſted on this lamb on the night following this evening. We ſhall preſently ſee that the adverſaries of the Quarta-decimans did not diſagree with them reſpecting this ſupper itſelf, but as to the time of celebrating it. (IV.) By this Paſchal feaſt which the Aſiatic Chriſtians were accuſtomed to celebrate at the ſame time with the Jews, an interruption took place in that ſtrict and ſolemn faſt which the other Chriſtians made it a rule inviolably to obſerve throughout the whole of the great or holy week. Immediately after the celebration of this feaſt, however, it was the practice of the Quarta-decimans to reſume their faſting, and continue it until the day appropriated to the commemoration of our Saviour's return to life. The reader will find this recorded by Epiphanius in *Hæreſ.* lxx. *Audianorum*, § xi. p. 823. The *Audians*, in their celebration of the Paſchal feaſt, were accuſtomed to follow the example of the Aſiatic Chriſtians or Quarta-decimans, and juſtified their practice by alleging that in the *Apoſtolical Conſtitutions*, a work different from the one that has reached our days under that title, and at preſent conſidered as irrecoverably loſt, the Apoſtles had expreſsly enjoined that in celebrating their Paſchal rites the Chriſtians were to obſerve the ſame time with the Jews. Epiphanius labours hard to deprive them of this argument; and amongſt other things with which he encounters them, adduces the following paſſage from the ſame Conſtitutions: λέγουσι δὲ αὐτοὶ Ἀπόστολοι, ὅτι ὅταν ἐκεῖνοι εὐωχῶνται ὑμεῖς νηστεύοντες ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν πενθεῖτε, ὅτι ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς ἑορτῆς τὸν χριστὸν ἐσταύρωσαν. Καὶ ὅταν αὐτοὶ πενθῶσι τὰ ἄζυμα ἐσθίοντες ἐν πικρίσιν, ὑμεῖς εὐωχεῖσθε. *Iidem Apoſtoli* (in the conſtitutions which ye quote as favouring your practice) *præcipiunt, Dum epulantur illi* (the Jews), *vos jejunantes pro illis lugete, quoniam Feſto illo die Chriſtum in Crucem ſuſtulerunt. Cumque illi lugentes azymis & lactucis agreſtibus veſcentur, vos epulamini.* The Chriſtians are here enjoined by the Apoſtles to celebrate the paſſover with the Jews, and thereupon they are told to feaſt and rejoice at the time when the Jews were ſorrowfully eating their unleavened bread and bitter herbs, and on the contrary to mourn and faſt on the day that the Jews

CENT. II.

place at Rome between Anicetus, the biſhop of . . . that

Controverſy reſpecting the Paſchal obſervances.

Jews rejoiced on account of their having put Chriſt to death. Petavius the erudite tranſlator of Epiphanius, avows himſelf unable to comprehend the meaning of the Apoſtles in this. But from what we have obſerved above, there is as much light thrown upon this apoſtolical injunction as is neceſſary. The Chriſtians who agreed with the Jews as to the time of celebrating the Paſſover, held with joy and gladneſs their Paſchal feaſt in commemoration of the inſtitution of the Lord's ſupper on the ſame night that the Jews fed on bitter herbs and unleavened bread, but on the following day, when the Jews gave themſelves up to rejoicing, theſe Chriſtians returned again to faſting, humiliation and tears, inaſmuch as it was on that day that their Lord and Maſter Chriſt had been put to death on the croſs.——(V.) On the third day following the fourteenth of the month, the Aſiatic Chriſtians always celebrated the anniverſary of Chriſt's reſurrection from the dead. For ſince, as we are informed by Polycrates, they made it a point to follow as exactly as poſſible the example of Chriſt, and the rule of the Goſpel, and it appeared from the teſtimony of the evangeliſts that Chriſt aroſe from the dead on the third day after the Jewiſh paſſover, conſiſtency required that they ſhould fix on this day for the annual commemoration of that glorious event. This practice, however, gave riſe to another difference between them and other Chriſtians. For it was the cuſtom with the latter never to keep the feaſt of the reſurrection on any other than the firſt day of the week, or, as we term it, Sunday: whereas the former, we mean the Aſiatic Chriſtians, very frequently celebrated Chriſt's triumph over death and the grave on one or other of the ordinary week days. For as the fourteenth day of the month did not always fall on one and the ſame day of the week, and they always commemorated our bleſſed Saviour's return to life on the third day after the fourteenth, it of courſe happened that ſuch commemoration took place with them in one year on a Monday, in the next, perhaps on a Tueſday, and in a third on a Wedneſday, and ſo on. When the fourteenth day of the month, for inſtance, fell on a Tueſday, theſe Aſiatic Chriſtians kept the feaſt of the reſurrection on the Thurſday following: or ſuppoſing it to fall on a Wedneſday, their feaſt took place on the Friday after. Hence the Roman prelate Victor, and thoſe who took part with him, decreed; ὡς ἂν μὴ δὲ ἐν ἄλλῃ ποτὲ τῆς κυριακῆς ἡμέρᾳ τὸ τῆς ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναςάσεως ἐπιτελοῖτο τοῦ Κυρίου μυςήριον,

that city, and Polycarp the celebrated biſhop of Smyrna. CENT. II.

Controverſy reſpecting the Paſchal obſervances.

μυστήριον. Καὶ ὅπως ἐν ταύτῃ μόνῃ τῶν κατὰ τὸ Πάσχα νηστειῶν φυλαττόμεθα τὰς τελευτάσεις. *Ne videlicet ullo alio quam Dominico Die myſterium reſurrectionis Domini unquam celebretur; utque eo duntaxat die Jejuniorum Paſchæ terminum obſervemus.* Euſebius, *Hiſtor. Eccleſ.* lib. v. cap. xxiii. p. 190. It is plain, therefore, that the Aſiatic Chriſtians muſt frequently have celebrated *The myſtery of the Reſurrection of Chriſt* on a different day from Sunday: for had they, in the celebration of this myſtery, conformed to the practice of other Chriſtians, there would have been no neceſſity for this regulation. In theſe words of Euſebius, however, it is obſervable that a clear diſtinction is made between the day of the myſtery of Chriſt's reſurrection and what is termed *Paſcha*, that is the ſeaſon devoted to the commemoration of his death and paſſion. In the obſervance of *Paſcha*, that is, the commemoration of Chriſt's ſufferings and death, the Aſiatic Chriſtians, as to time, agreed preciſely with the reſt: the only thing in which they differed was, that whereas the latter faſted without intermiſſion throughout the whole of the ſeaſon, the Aſiatics indulged themſelves with a temporary relaxation on the fourteenth day. The myſtery of Chriſt's reſurrection, however, was not always celebrated by them on the Sunday, as was the uniform practice of all other Chriſtians, but, occaſionally, on other days of the week, agreeably to what we have above remarked. This difference was certainly of greater moment, and, to confeſs the truth, one leſs eaſily to be endured than the other. For to celebrate the feſtival of Chriſt's reſurrection on a different day of the week from that whereon he actually aroſe, muſt have appeared repugnant, not only to the faith of hiſtory, but to ancient cuſtom and Chriſtian decency. —— (VI.) The Chriſtians dwelling without the confines of Aſia deemed it irreligious to terminate the Paſchal faſt before the feſtival of the reſurrection; and as altogether unbecoming and diſgraceful in Chriſtians to hold out any oſtenſible connection between their paſchal lamb, ſo widely differing in its purpoſe and deſign from that of the Jews, and the Jewiſh paſſover. They therefore deferred their Paſchal feaſt until the night preceding the feſtival of our Saviour's reſurrection, and connected the commemoration of the inſtitution of the Lord's ſupper with that of Chriſt's triumph over death and the grave. Let us hear as to this Epiphanius, *in Hæreſ.* l. *Quartadecimanorum.* § iii. p. 421, ἡ ἁγία Θεοῦ ἐκκλησία - - - κέκρηται δὲ μόνον τεσσαρεσκαιδεκάτῃ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῇ ἑβδομάδι

CENT. II.

Controverſy reſpecting the Paſchal obſervances.

Smyrna [x]. But by no arguments whatever could the Chriſtians of Aſia be prevailed on to abandon

[x] See Euſebius *Hiſtor. Eccleſ.* lib. iv. cap. xiv. p. 127. and lib. v. cap. xxiv. p. 193. In fact it is to this author that we are indebted for nearly the whole of what is here related.

ἑβδομάδι - - ἵνα κατὰ τὰ ὑπὸ τῆ κυρίᾳ γενόμενα κατὰ τὸπρωτότυπὸν, ἦιν ἀνάϛασις τε καὶ ἐυωχία. *Eccleſia ſancta Dei - - - non ſolum decimam quartam diem ſed etiam hebdomada obſervat - - - ut ad eorum exemplar quæ ſunt a Domino geſta Reſurrectio epulæque celebrentur.* And after ſome intervening remarks, he continues, Φέρομεν δὲ ἐπὶ τὴν ὠγίαν κυριακὴν τὸ τέλος τῆς συμποῤῥώσεως· λαμϐάνομεν δὲ τὸ πρόϐατον ἀπὸ δεκάτης, ὄνομα τῆ Ἰωσῆ ἐπιγνόντες διὰ τὸ Ἰῶτα, ἵναμὴ λάθη ἡμᾶς μηδὲν τῶν κατὰ τὴν ἀλήθειαν πασᾶν τῆς ζωτικῆς ταύτης τῆ πάσχα τῆς ἐκκλησιαϛικης πραγματειας. *In ſanctam Dominicam religioſiſſimi temporis finem conjicimus: ſed agnum jam tum a decimo die ſumimus quoniam in Iota littera Jeſu nomen agnoſcimus, ne quid omnino diligentiam noſtram effugiat, quod ad eccleſiaſticam ſalutaris paſchæ celebrationem pertinere videatur.* Now we will not ſpend our time in endeavouring to diſpel the obſcurity in which this paſſage alſo of Epiphanius is involved, but direct our attention merely to ſuch things as ſtand in no need of elucidation. In the firſt place, then, it is to be remarked, that the adverſaries of the Aſiatic Chriſtians celebrated a paſchal feaſt juſt as theſe Chriſtians themſelves did. Secondly, that they conjoined this feaſt with the feſtival of our Lord's reſurrection. Thirdly, that as to this matter they, no leſs than the Aſiatics, perſuaded themſelves that they followed the example of Jeſus Chriſt; but in what way they could poſſibly have made this appear is not very eaſy to comprehend. Fourthly, that by this feaſt, which they celebrated in the night preceding the day devoted to the commemoration of our Lord's reſurrection, they cloſed their paſchal ſeaſon, or that moſt holy period of time which was annually ſet apart for the ſolemn commemoration of Chriſt's ſufferings and death. This feaſt, therefore, conſtituted no part of the commemoration of the reſurrection, but was the grand concluding act of the preceding paſchal ſeaſon. The night being elapſed, theſe Chriſtians commenced with the dawning day their celebration of the anniverſary of Chriſt's triumph over death and the grave. Fifthly, it appears

abandon their practice, which they conſidered as having been handed down to them by the apoſtle

CENT. II.

Controverſy reſpecting the Paſchal obſervances.

appears that the paſchal lamb, of which they partook on the night preceding the feaſt of the reſurrection, was ſelected and put under a courſe of preparation on the tenth day of the month; a circumſtance correſponding preciſely with the practice of the Aſiatics. For this Epiphanius gives us a far-fetched reaſon derived from the letter I, which is the firſt in the name of Jeſus. The force of this reaſon, however, may be comprehended without difficulty. The letter Iota was made uſe of by the Greeks to denote the number ten. Theſe Chriſtians then, if any faith is to be placed in the ſtatement given by Epiphanius, reaſoned after this manner: the name of Jeſus begins with the letter I; but the letter I denotes the number ten; that lamb therefore which is the ſhadow or emblem of Jeſus, who was ſacrificed for our ſins, ought to be ſelected from the flock, and brought to the houſe of the high prieſt on the tenth day. This mode of reaſoning was certainly by no means foreign to the genius or diſpoſition of the early Chriſtians, who, like the Cabbaliſt Jews, conceived great myſteries to be involved in certain numbers. I muſt confeſs, however, that I do not believe this to have been the true origin of the cuſtom, but rather ſuſpect Epiphanius to have followed, in this inſtance, merely the ſuggeſtions of his own fancy. The lamb thus ſeparated from the flock on the tenth day, and in a certain degree conſecrated, was not immediately ſlain, but ſeems to have been kept alive until the evening next preceding the feaſt of the reſurrection. Sixthly, it appears that theſe adverſaries of the Aſiatic Chriſtians gave to the whole of the ſeaſon which they devoted to the commemoration of Chriſt's ſufferings and death, and more particularly to that feaſt with which they concluded it, the denomination of *Paſcha*. This is manifeſt from the laſt words of Epiphanius. (VII). Theſe things, then being duly weighed and aſcertained, it is, I think, plainly to be perceived in what reſpects the Aſiatic Chriſtians or Quarta-decimans differed from the reſt. Their diſagreement was not, as the learned father Daniel imagined, reſpecting the proper ſeaſon or day for commemorating Chriſt's death: for it was no leſs the practice of the Chriſtians in general than of the Aſiatics to conſider as peculiarly ſolemn and ſacred, that day on which Chriſt made atonement by his death for the ſins of the human race: and

even

CENT. II.

Controverſy reſpecting the Paſchal obſervances.

tle St. John. Impatient therefore of their pertinacity, it was towards the cloſe of the century determined by Victor, biſhop of Rome, that theſe Aſiatics ſhould be dealt with after a more peremptory manner, and be compelled by certain laws and decrees to conform themſelves to the rule obſerved by the greateſt part of the Chriſtian community. In this reſolution he was ſupported by the voice of ſeveral councils that were called together in various provinces on the ſubject; and under the cover of their ſanction, he addreſſed to the Aſiatic biſhops an imperious epiſtle, admoniſhing them no longer to perſiſt in differing from other Chriſtians as to their paſchal obſerv-

even as to the very day itſelf no difference of opinion whatever exiſted between them and the Aſiatics. παραπεφύλαχα, ſays Epiphanius, *Hæreſ.* L. i. § iii. p. 421. μὲν τὴν τεσσαρεσκαιδεκατην. *Et nos quartam illam decimam diem* (which is held ſacred by the Quarta-decimans) *religioſe ſervamus.* Neither did the time for celebrating the feaſt of our Lord's reſurrection conſtitute the principal or leading point in diſpute between them, but the time for holding the paſchal ſupper. The diſpute, in fact, embraced the three following queſtions: Firſt, whether it was proper to begin the day devoted to the commemoration of Chriſt's ſufferings and death with the paſchal ſupper, and thereby break in upon the ſacred and ſolemn faſt of the day? The Chriſtians of Aſia Minor aſſerted the propriety of this uſage, the other Chriſtians denied it. Secondly, whether it was becoming, in the diſciples and followers of Chriſt, to eat their paſchal lamb at the ſame time when the Jews, his moſt inveterate and rancorous enemies, ate theirs? The Aſiatic Chriſtians contended that it was; the other Chriſtians, that it was not. Thirdly, whether it was proper to celebrate the feaſt of our bleſſed Saviour's reſurrection always on the third day after the fourteenth day of the month on which he was put to death? The Aſiatic Chriſtians maintained that it was; the others, that it was not; theſe latter inſiſting, that as it was on the firſt day of the week that Chriſt actually aroſe from the dead, no other day than this ought to be appropriated to the commemoration of that ſtupendous and unparalleled event.

ances [*y*]. Finding, however, that they were not in this way to be moved, but that they boldly addreſſed letters to the Roman church by Polycrates, biſhop of Epheſus, in juſtification of their ancient practice, Victor proceeded to the further length of excluding them from his communion, or, in other words, he pronounced them altogether unworthy of being any longer conſidered by him and his church in the light of brethren [*z*]. This imprudent

CENT. II.

Termination of the Paſchal controverſy.

[*y*] Polycrates in his Epiſtle to the Roman church, *apud* Euſeb. *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. v. cap. xxiv. p. 192, ſays, ὃ πτύρομαι ἐπὶ τοῖς καταπλησσομένοις. *Nihil moveor iis quæ nobis ad formidinem intentantur.* Theſe words plainly prove that Victor did not purſue a moderate and amicable courſe with his Aſiatic brethren, but had recourſe to threats, and wiſhed to have impreſſed their minds with fear.

[*z*] Euſebius *Hiſtor. Eccleſ.* lib. v. cap. xxiv. p. 192, ſays, Εἰκτῶρ ἀθρόως τῆς Ασίας πάσης ἅμα ταῖς ὁμόρεις ἐκκλησίαις τὰς παροικίας ἀποτέμνειν ὡς ἑτεροδοξούσας τῆς κοινῆς ἑνώσεως πειρᾶται, καὶ στηλίτευει γε διὰ γραμμάτων ἀκοινωνήτους ἅρδην πάντας τοὺς ἐκεῖσε ἀνακηρύττων ἀδελφούς. Of theſe words Valeſius gives us the following tranſlation. *Victor omnis Aſiæ vicinarumque Provinciarum Eccleſias, tamquam contraria rectæ Fidei ſentientes, a Communione abſcindere conatur, datiſque litteris univerſos qui illic erant fratres proſcribit, & ab unitate eccleſiæ prorſus alienos eſſe pronuntiat.* From the word πειρᾶται, which Euſebius makes uſe of, this learned writer thought himſelf juſtified in concluding that Victor did not in reality exclude the Aſiatics from all communion with the faithful, but merely wiſhed, or attempted ſo to exclude them, and that this his attempt was fruſtrated by the interference of Irenæus. This interpretation is approved of by many of the friends to the papacy, who ſeem to imagine that the temerity of Victor is thereby ſomewhat extenuated. Others would contend that at leaſt this much muſt be granted them, that the words of Euſebius are ambiguous, and that we are conſequently left in a ſtate of obſcurity as to whether Victor actually excommunicated the Aſiatics, or merely wiſhed and endeavoured to have them excommunicated. By the greater part however, not only of Proteſtant but Roman Catholic writers, it has long been conſidered that what is ſubſequently ſaid by Euſebius of Victor's having by letters excluded

CENT. II.

prudent ſtep might have been productive of the moſt ſerious detriment to the intereſts of Chriſtianity

Termination of the Paſchal controverſy.

cluded the Aſiatics from his communion, relieves his preceding words from every ſort of obſcurity, and makes it apparent that the Roman prelate did not content himſelf with merely willing the thing, but actually carried his threats into execution. But to me it appears that even theſe, although their ideas on the ſubject are more correct than thoſe of Valeſius and his followers, have not exactly caught the meaning of Euſebius. The hiſtorian, unleſs I am altogether deceived, is ſpeaking of two deſigns which Victor had in view, the one of which was merely conceived, the other carried into effect. Victor both wiſhed and endeavoured to bring about the expulſion of the Aſiatics from all communion with the Catholic church, as corrupters of the true religion; but in this he failed of ſucceſs: for the other biſhops would neither conform themſelves to his will, nor imitate his example. What therefore he could accompliſh without the concurrence of the other biſhops, that he did; that is to ſay, he by letter expelled the Aſiatics from all communion with the church of Rome over which he preſided. The latter words of Euſebius are badly rendered by Valeſius, and through this faulty tranſlation, ſupport has been afforded to a common error in regard to what was done by Victor on this occaſion, to which I ſhall preſently advert. The Greek words, ἀνακηρύττων ἀκοινωνήτους are rendered into Latin by Valeſius thus, *ab unitate eccleſiæ prorſus alienos eſſe pronuntiat.* But this by no means correſponds with the Greek original, in which nothing whatever is ſaid of alienation, *ab unitate eccleſiæ.* The tranſlation ought to have ran *a communione ſua alienos pronuntiabat.* The words of this eminent ſcholar however, are ſtrictly in uniſon with the common opinion of both Roman Catholics and Proteſtants, who are all unanimous in conſidering Victor as having, by his letters, deprived the Aſiatic brethren of every ſort of communion with the whole Chriſtian church; in fact, as having on this occaſion aſſerted the ſame powers with regard to excommunication as were exerciſed by his ſucceſſors poſterior to the age of Charlemagne. The Proteſtants in particular call upon us to mark in this caſe the firſt ſpecimen of the arrogant and domineering ſpirit of the biſhop of Rome, the firſt example of anti-chriſtian excommunication. But theſe worthy men laboured under an error, and formed their judgment

tianity had not Irenæus, biſhop of Lyons in Gaul, interfered, and, although differing himſelf in opinion

CENT. II.

Termination of the Paſchal controverſy.

judgment of a matter of antiquity from the practice of more recent times. In the age in which Victor lived, the power of the biſhop of Rome had not attained to ſuch an height as to enable him to cut off from communion with the church at large all thoſe of whoſe opinions or practices he might ſee reaſon to diſapprove. The very hiſtory of the Paſchal controverſy now before us, places this out of all diſpute. For had the biſhop of Rome poſſeſſed the right and power of cutting off whom he pleaſed from all communion with the church at large, neither Irenæus nor the reſt of the biſhops would have dared to oppoſe his will, but muſt have bowed with ſubmiſſion to whatever he might have thought proper to determine. Every biſhop however poſſeſſed the power of excluding all ſuch as he might conſider to be the advocates of grievous errors, or as the corrupters of religion, from all communion with himſelf and the church over which he preſided, or in other words, he might declare them unworthy of being conſidered any longer as brethren. This power indeed is poſſeſſed by the teachers of the church even at this day. Victor then, exerciſed this common right with which every biſhop was inveſted, and by letters made known to the other churches that he had excluded the Chriſtians of Aſia Minor, on account of their pertinacity in defending their ancient practice, from all communion with himſelf and the church of Rome, expecting, in all probability, that the other biſhops might be induced to follow his example, and in like manner renounce all connection with theſe Aſiatics. But in this he was deceived. ἀλλ' ὐ πᾶσι γε τοῖς ἐπισκόποις ταῦτ' ἠρέσκετο, ſays Euſebius, *Hiſtor. Eccleſ.* lib. v. cap. xxiv. p. 192. *Verum non omnibus hæc placebant Epiſcopis.* The reſt of the biſhops declined following the example of the Roman prelate in a line of conduct ſo very dangerous and imprudent. There can be no doubt, however, but that they would have followed his example, indeed, whether willing or not, they muſt have followed it, if in this age the doors of the church might have been cloſed againſt men by the mere will of the Roman biſhop. The conduct of Victor therefore, on this occaſion, although diſtinguiſhed by temerity and imprudence, does yet not wear ſo dark an aſpect as is commonly imagined, neither could it have been attended with conſequences of ſuch extenſive importance

as

CENT. II.

Termination of the Paſchal controverſy.

nion from the Aſiatics, written letters to the biſhop of Rome and the other prelates, pointing out, in the moſt forcible terms, the injuſtice of depriving of their rights, and pronouncing unworthy of the name of Chriſtians, brethren, whoſe ſentiments, with regard to religion itſelf, were ſtrictly correct, and againſt whom no other matter of offence could be alleged than a diverſity as to certain external rites and obſervances. The Aſiatics alſo, in a long epiſtle which they circulated throughout the Chriſtian world, took care to remove from themſelves every ſuſpicion of an attempt to corrupt the Catholic religion. A ſort of compromiſe, therefore, took place with regard to thoſe ritual differences, each party retaining its own peculiar opinions and uſages, until the holding of the council of Nice, in the fourth century, when the cuſtom of the Aſiatics was altogether aboliſhed.

as thoſe would have us believe who hold it up as the firſt abuſe of excommunication. The fact is, that they who treat the matter in this way, are guilty of an abuſe with regard to the term *excommunication*. Victor did not (according to the ſenſe in which the term is at preſent underſtood) *excommunicate* the Aſiatics, but merely declared that he and the members of the church over which he preſided, muſt ceaſe to conſider them in the light of brethren until they ſhould conſent to renounce their objectionable practices.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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